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2010: Mar.
c. 3

March 2010 \$5.00

Illinois Issues

A publication of the University of Illinois Springfield



UNPAID BILLS

**The state's inability —
or unwillingness —
to meet its commitments
is a bum deal**



Illinois Issues

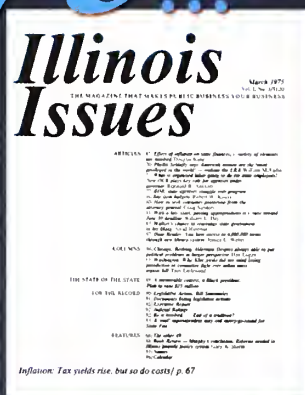
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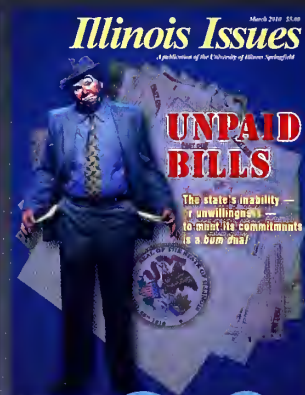
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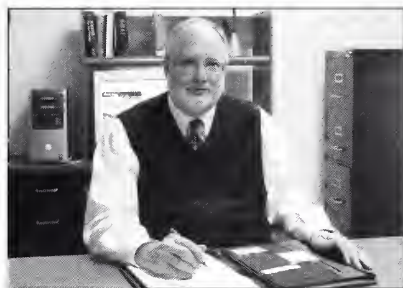


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Dana Heupel



People are suffering mightily because our state government is a deadbeat

by Dana Heupel

As a kid growing up in a small Midwestern town, I often overheard my father, who owned a local business, talk about his customers who didn't pay their bills. There was a word he used, an epithet so repulsive that I decided early on I never wanted it applied to me.

Deadbeat.

Please don't get the impression that my father or other local business owners were heartless. If a debtor couldn't pay his bills because he had lost his job, faced a family crisis or became ill, the businesses made concessions. So long as the unfortunate debtor made an effort to pay and was trying to remedy the bad situation, he didn't fall into the deadbeat category. No, deadbeats were those who didn't pay their bills, didn't appear to care how they harmed the people they owed and seemed to have no inclination to remedy the situation.

Sort of like Illinois state government.

OK, it may be simplistic to apply the small-town Midwestern values of my Eisenhower-era youth to a 21st century enterprise as large and complex as the

It's ethically reprehensible. It violates everything they espouse in their speeches and brochures. It's just plain wrong.

government of the fifth-largest state in the nation. Or is it? Shouldn't the collection of lawyers, business owners, insurance agents and other well-educated professionals who pose as our elected representatives be able to figure out that not paying your bills — creating havoc and untold harm for constituents who provide goods or services to the state — isn't just an unfortunate result of the economic downturn? It's ethically reprehensible. It violates everything they espouse in their speeches and brochures. It's just plain wrong.

But like some of those who owed money to businesses in my small hometown, our leaders don't appear to

care enough about the harm they're causing to do anything about it. As Jamey Dunn's article on page 17 points out, state government's creditors are losing their businesses. The stress is straining marriages. Those who already have provided help to our most needy citizens aren't being paid and are closing their doors to others whose lives are being devastated by the economic crisis. Schools are preparing to lay off teachers. Doctors may soon turn away patients with state health insurance.

Yet our supposed leaders can't seem to get it into their heads that the situation is not simply an unfortunate business reality. It's not a political rallying point. It's not an irritating condition that will go away on its own. It's way past that. After months and months — with seemingly many more months to come — their inaction has moved into the realm of unconscionable cruelty. And when all is said — and nothing is done — it's just plain wrong.

If all that sounds overwrought and dramatic, it is. People are suffering mightily because our state government

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is a deadbeat. What will it take to finally break through the hardened, cynical shell that apparently surrounds our elected representatives and insulates them from the chaos and devastation their inaction is causing?

It's way past finger-pointing time, as well. The detritus that now litters Illinois' economic landscape is the result of a violent crash of political and economic forces that have been moving relentlessly toward one another on a collision course for years. Demagoguery. Greed. Unrealistic expenditures. Broken promises. Irresponsibility. Delayed decisions. And yes, even good intentions. Both political parties are to blame. And both political parties are shirking their responsibility — no, their ethical obligation — to clean up the debris and rebuild as quickly as possible.

Instead, the out-of-power Republicans are using their constituents' misery as a bargaining chip to advance their agenda — pension and Medicaid reforms, social service cuts, smaller government — and as a way to perhaps regain political power, though God knows why anyone would want it under conditions that will only grow worse throughout the spring, summer and fall. They have no incentive to help ease the crisis when they can use it to their political advantage. Moral imperative be damned.

The Democrats are no better. They control both legislative chambers and the governor's office and can pass legislation to help alleviate the crisis now, without help from the Republicans. But all bets are that they won't because they want political cover from Republicans on any hard decisions, such as tax increases or unpopular budget cuts, so they don't jeopardize their electoral majority come November. This is Illinois, after all, where political self-interest trumps public responsibility every time.

Regardless of which party holds the reins of state government after the votes are counted in November, those

in charge will face even more difficult decisions than they do now. Despite campaign slogans about budget cuts versus tax increases, most observers agree there is no one-size-fits-all answer. The only realistic solution is a combination of cuts and taxes, along with fervent prayers for an economic rebound.

All that posturing is just politics as usual, you may say. And I'm not naïve enough to discount the obvious fact that politicians play politics. But don't we ever reach a point when political considerations must yield to concerns about the welfare of the constituency? And with a budget deficit expected to top \$11 billion — more than 40 percent of the state's annual general fund — and a \$3.5 billion backlog in unpaid bills, and with businesses failing because the state won't pay its bills, and with social service agencies and educational institutions on the brink of collapse, haven't we reached that time?

Waiting until after the November election will only bring more pain to more people. And if reason doesn't persuade our elected leaders to — just for one brief moment — put politics aside and work together to do what must be done, perhaps an appeal to their basic humanity might crack their until-now seemingly impermeable shells.

Given that one of the fundamental tenets of the grass-roots voter movement is disgust with political bickering on the national stage, our elected leaders in Illinois might be wise to apply a statement by the aforementioned President Eisenhower — also a small-town Midwesterner — to their own situation: "A people that values its privileges above its principles soon loses both."

Just as appropriate might be a caution often attributed — perhaps wrongly — to 18th century Irish philosopher and statesman Edmund Burke. "All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing." □

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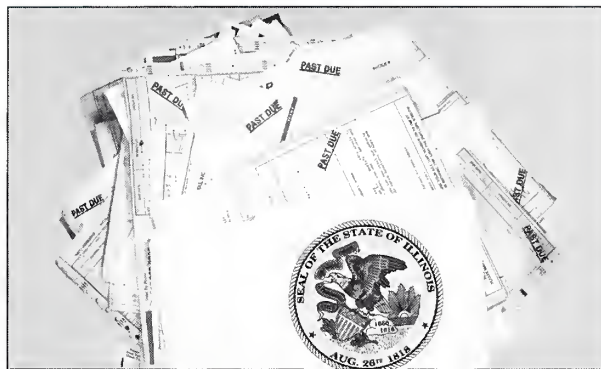
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A publication of the University of Illinois Springfield

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Hours are 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Central Time, Monday-Friday (except holidays). *Subscriptions:* \$39.95 one year/ \$72 two years/ \$105 three years; student rate is \$20 a year. Individual copy is \$5. Back issue is \$5. Illinois Issues is indexed in the PAIS Bulletin and is available electronically on our home page: <http://illinoisissues.uis.edu>. Illinois Issues (ISSN 0738-9663) is published monthly, except July and August are combined. December is published online only. Periodical postage paid at Springfield, IL, and additional mailing offices.

Postmaster: Send address changes to Illinois Issues, Subscription Division, P.O. Box 19243, Springfield, IL 62794-9243.

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Illinois Issues is published by Center Publications
Center for State Policy and Leadership
<http://cspl.uis.edu>

Jamey Dunn



Scandals highlight the need for juvenile justice reform

by Jamey Dunn

Just a few months ago, it looked as if the scandal surrounding the “Meritorious Good Time Push” prisoner-release program could cost Gov. Pat Quinn a win in the primary election. Under the program, exposed by the Associated Press in December, the Illinois Department of Corrections was awarding prisoners months of early release time for good behavior in the first few days of their sentences, thus returning some violent offenders to the streets after they spent just a few weeks behind bars.

Quinn, who went on to win the primary, called the program “a mistake” at a Chicago news conference. “The revolving door is something we have to deal with,” he said.

Problems such as overcrowding, understaffing and consistently high recidivism rates in Illinois’ prison system are nothing new. However, scandals such as the “MGT Push” program highlight the need for comprehensive long-term reforms. Perhaps the state that housed the first juvenile court, established in Cook County in 1899, should begin by reforming its juvenile justice system to get young people off a trajectory of crime and institutionalization as early as possible.

Separating the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice from the Illinois Department of Corrections in 2006 created an opportunity for the state to rehabilitate youth offenders. The goal is to get them

Juvenile justice reformers say the first step is changing attitudes about locking up kids who pose little risk to their communities.

out of the revolving door of the corrections system as early as possible by attempting to help them become productive adults. However, after that first step, little has been done to create systematic change in the way youthful lawbreakers are treated.

The intention of the split was to create a system that treated youth offenders differently from adults. The plan was to focus on comprehensive treatment for adolescents and get to the root of what made them break the law in the first place. The John Howard Association, a prison reform group based in Chicago, released a report early this year assessing the status of the department’s efforts to fulfill its mission.

According to the report: “The vision guiding the creation of the new Department of Juvenile Justice called for the creation of a correctional agency founded on the principles of balanced and restorative justice that would provide age- and gender-appropriate rehabilita-

tive treatment delivered in a culturally competent manner to all youth committed to its care. To date, that vision has not yet been realized, nor supported with resources.”

The report highlights overcrowding in some juvenile corrections facilities. At some institutions, staff-to-inmate ratios are 1-to-24 during daytime hours and 1-to-60 at night. According to the association, levels recommended for best practices are one staff member to every eight to 10 kids.

Complaints about the conditions of youth detention came to a head after the suicide of a 16-year-old last fall at a youth center in St. Charles. “We suspect some facilities are just totally inadequate,” says former Judge George Timberlake, chairman of Quinn’s Juvenile Justice Commission. The commission is working with a national panel to visit and assess the state’s juvenile detention facilities. Timberlake says the members plan to make recommendations this spring.

The report also criticizes the Department of Juvenile Justice for continuing to use the adult parole system. Parole officers carry heavy caseloads, and their primary objective is enforcement. For the most part, all they do for youth offenders is make sure they are not violating conditions of their parole.

Parole officers in the adult system do not have the resources and are not

charged with helping kids transition back into society. Without such guidance, many youth offenders violate their parole or commit another crime and end up incarcerated again. The recidivism rate for Illinois' juvenile justice system is more than 50 percent.

"Most youth entering the criminal justice system are lacking in even the basic social skills that most noncriminal youth take for granted. These skills do not develop spontaneously; they need to be taught and practiced," the report says.

Timberlake agrees that the Department of Juvenile Justice still has a long way to go toward becoming completely independent of the Department of Corrections. "In many, many ways, it hasn't changed much. ... It's a huge transition. They have almost no administrative staff."

Juvenile justice reformers say the first step is changing attitudes about locking up kids who pose little risk to their communities.

Part of the reason for slow-moving change may be that incarceration has been the primary option for so many years. "[Detention centers] are what we've got, so that's what we use," Timberlake says.

Betsy Clarke, president of the advocacy group Juvenile Justice Initiative, agrees it is difficult to change the inertia of the juvenile justice agency because for so many years, it was part of the Department of Corrections, which focused primarily on incarceration and punishing crime. "We have run the corrections business for so long, and it is hard to get away from it."

However, experts on all sides of the system agree that when possible, it is best to keep kids out of detention facilities in the first place. "The kids are made more likely to re-offend just by bringing them into the court system," Ogle County State's Attorney John Roe says.

Timberlake and Roe say one important component is having kids assessed as soon as they enter the system. Instead of focusing wholly on the crime, the agency would seek to learn if it could be a symptom of another problem, such as mental illness, drug dependence, abuse or neglect. "All of those things can lead you deeper and deeper into a criminal lifestyle," Timberlake says, but "identi-

The report also criticizes the Department of Juvenile Justice for continuing to use the adult parole system.

fied and treated ... the criminal part of it goes away." He adds that plans for helping kids get back on track and into their communities should start to be developed as soon as they are arrested.

Those working to keep low-level youth offenders out of detention centers say that connection to the community is the most important factor when it comes to rehabilitation. A few pilot programs across the state operate under that concept. They try to remove kids from the system as early as possible and filter them into community-based programs. Redeploy Illinois is one such program. According to the Department of Human Services, in the three years of its existence, Redeploy Illinois has reduced the number of juvenile offenders incarcerated from the counties it serves by more than 50 percent.

Such programs seek to help kids find connections and worth in their communities, so they can find ways to better their own lives and also feel a responsibility to those around them. They attempt to give kids reasons to abide by the law other than the threat of being locked up, which clearly did not deter them in the first place.

Another pilot project that is trying to set an example is the Models for Change program. Sherri Egan, director of Ogle County Juvenile Justice Council, says the program has been a big success in her county. "What people need to realize is, when you send these kids away [to be incarcerated], they are coming back to your community," she says.

Roe agrees that the program has made Ogle County safer. "Our success has come from reaching out to the community and getting them to accept the program. ... You'll find that your community cares about the kids," he says. "We are seeing the fruits of our labor."

Programs like those cost the state less than incarcerating youth offenders. According to the Department of Correc-

tions, keeping someone in a youth corrections center costs about \$85,000 per year. Clarke estimates that a community-based program would cost less than \$10,000. She says the individual costs would vary because each plan would be geared specifically toward each youth's needs. "They are a heck of a lot cheaper than [incarceration]," Timberlake agrees.

Being deferred into community programs is not an alternative for all kids. Violent offenders would still need to be incarcerated and treated in a safe environment. However, removing lower-risk offenders from detention centers would help to ease overcrowding and create safer facilities.

"If you want to help a kid and reach a kid who is tough to reach, if you want them to overcome a substance abuse problem, if you want them to get mental health treatment, if you want them to get a GED, that all begins with the kids knowing that they are in a safe and secure environment," says Anders Lindall, spokesman for Council 31 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees.

Experts agree that mixing low-level offenders with more serious ones boosts the chances that lower-risk kids will break the law again after release.

The Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice is starting to recognize the merits of such programs. "We do believe that community corrections is probably the better way to go," says Januari Smith, spokeswoman for the agency, as well as for the Department of Corrections.

Reforms to the state's juvenile justice system can help break the cycle of criminal behavior and get kids — who may have a better shot at rehabilitation than adults — out of the corrections system. If youth offenders can be guided toward becoming productive adults instead of being locked up, it could take the strain off correctional centers and strengthen communities. Over time, it could also have a positive impact on the adult corrections system.

"Punishment by itself will not change behavior," Timberlake says. "We keep sending kids to prison, and they keep coming out worse than we sent them — and we just keep sending them more kids." ■

BRIEFLY

Illinoisans respond to crisis in Haiti

Sue Walsh, a clinical instructor for the College of Nursing at the University of Illinois Chicago, had just finished a week-long clinic in Haiti as part of a team of 23. The group was scheduled to leave the country the next day. As team members were walking back to the monastery where they were staying, the 7.0 magnitude earthquake hit on January 12.

"We were feeling very blessed about our week, being able to help nearly 1,000 people, when the earth began to shake," says Walsh, founder of Little by Little, a Glenview-based nonprofit organization that runs periodic health clinics in Haiti. After the earthquake, the volunteers gathered medical supplies and headed to the closest hospital. They helped nearly 100 trauma patients that night. The next day, the team, which included four UIC students, set up a clinic in front of a home and treated earthquake-related injuries before leaving January 15.

"The extra time we had in Haiti was a blessing in disguise, so we were able to help more people in need," says Walsh. Little by Little has plans to send more medical teams to the hard-hit country.

Walsh says she is amazed by the compassion sparked by the crisis. "I don't have words for the levels of compassion and empathy. People are moving into a level of action. They want to help."

Illinoisans throughout the state have responded to the Haitian disaster that killed an estimated 200,000 people.

The Springfield-based Illinois Air National Guard 183rd Fighter Wing was activated January 18 to assist with relief efforts, which included coordinating deliveries of relief supplies.

Working closely with the federal government, the Hospital Sisters Mission Outreach in Springfield sent \$1.4 million in medical machinery and medical supplies, 92 tons of relief supplies and nine 40-foot shipping containers to Haiti as of January 29.

The Katherine Dunham Center for Arts and Humanities in East St. Louis held a candlelight vigil and an event called "Hip Hop for Haiti" to promote relief efforts. About 50 people attended the January vigil, and the organization collected donations and bags of clothing. The center also partnered with the city to collect donations of nonperishable items to send to Haiti.

Peoria-based Friends of the Children of Haiti sent a medical team to Cyvadier — just 25 miles from Port-au-Prince — where the organization operates a clinic. The medical and surgical team treated a wide variety of quake-related injuries. The group posted a blog to share their experiences: <http://haiti.pnn.com/10724-the-front-page>.

Photographs courtesy of Friends of the Children of Haiti



Earthquake victim Rose Iris LaFond is treated by nurse Trudy Vogel at the Friends of the Children of Haiti medical clinic in Cyvadier, Haiti. Friends of the Children is Peoria-based.



Dr. Bill Edwards of East Peoria starts an intravenous line on a 6-year-old patient in the medical clinic in Cyvadier. She had been ill with meningitis since shortly after the earthquake hit.

Phil Luciano, president of the board of trustees for the charity, says he is overwhelmed by the generosity. "The phone is ringing off the hook. People want to donate their time or give money to help."

Melissa Weissert

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Cemetery regulation plan becomes law

Six months after the shock of the Burr Oak Cemetery scandal, Gov. Pat Quinn signed a plan for comprehensive cemetery regulation into law.

Last July, investigators revealed that bodies buried in Burr Oak, a historic African-American cemetery in Alsip, were moved and dumped into a mass grave in an apparent scheme to resell individual grave sites. Four cemetery employees have been charged in connection with the scam.

The new law will shift oversight of cemeteries from the state comptroller's office to the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation. Anyone managing a cemetery or handling customer service and sales will have to be licensed by the department after submitting to a background check and passing examinations. Others such as groundskeepers will have to submit work histories and will receive "cemetery worker" cards from the department.

Cemeteries will keep records of every burial and submit them to a statewide database managed by the department. The plan creates a standardized process for the department to investigate complaints and enforce the new regulations.

"We would like to think that [Burr Oak] was an isolated incident. We don't know because no one has been watching," says Chicago Sen. Donne Trotter, sponsor of the legislation.

The law also contains a consumer bill of rights and protection for whistle blowers. Brent Adams, secretary of the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation, says his agency will begin issuing licenses in about nine months.

Family plots, cemeteries that have not had a burial in the past 10 years and those that are less than 2 acres are exempt from the new regulations. Religious cemeteries and municipal cemeteries that have fewer than 25 burials over the course of two years are partially exempt.

Sen. John Sullivan, a Rushville Democrat, opposes the law because he says that a partial exemption should be given to small private cemeteries as well. He says many do not have frequent



burials, and they have no tax revenue to bolster their profits. Sullivan says he is concerned some small private cemeteries in his district cannot afford to implement the new regulations.

Willie Carter, owner of the Restvale Cemetery in Alsip and a member of the cemetery task force Quinn appointed to recommend reforms after Burr Oak, agrees that the new regulations will place an undue burden on some operations. "Small cemeteries like mine cannot afford some of the fees ... in this bill," he says.

Rep. Dan Brady, a Bloomington Republican and licensed funeral director, disagrees. "It's not perfect, but it's a bill that did not paint all the cemeteries in Illinois with the same brush. And it has some real reforms, and it has reforms that I don't believe are burdensome to those smaller cemeteries."

Rep. Bill Black, a Danville Republican, calls the law "reactionary" and says it would penalize small cemeteries for the acts of criminals who would have broken the law no matter what it was. "Evidently [the individuals involved in Burr Oak] didn't care. The almighty dollar overruled any sense of common decency."

Jamey Dunn

LEGISLATIVE CHECKLIST

The General Assembly returned to Springfield briefly in January for the start of a new legislative session before lawmakers hit the campaign trail for primary elections in February. Here are some of the measures they considered while in session.

Medicaid match

✓ **SB 1425** The House advanced a measure that would allow the state to borrow \$250 million to pay medical providers for overdue bills. The funds are needed to leverage additional federal dollars. The bill is sponsored by two Democrats, Sen. Donne Trotter of Chicago and Rep. Linda Chapa LaVia of Aurora.

Tax amnesty

X **HB 4622** Proposed by Hinckley Republican Rep. Robert Pritchard, the measure would allow individuals and businesses to pay back taxes without penalties or interest. If approved as proposed, the bill would bring in an estimated \$100 million to pay for student Monetary Award Program grants. The bill stalled in committee.

Gov. Pat Quinn signed the following bills:

Meritorious Good Time

SB 1013 The law requires Department of Corrections inmates to serve at least 60 days in prison before becoming eligible for good behavior credit. Prosecutors are also entitled to a 14-day advance notice before a prisoner is released. The bill followed an Associated Press report that inmates were being released after spending just weeks in prison under a program called Meritorious Good Time Push.

Inmate video conferencing

HB 1995 The state will begin a pilot program allowing Department of Corrections inmates to use video conferencing to visit with family members. The agency may use conferencing as an alternative to transporting prisoners to facilities nearer their families.

Rachel Wells

Truth-in-Tuition law weighed

With public universities considering tuition hikes to keep their budgets in the black, some question whether guaranteeing rates for incoming freshmen may lead to larger increases.

The Truth-in-Tuition law went into effect in 2004. It requires Illinois universities to freeze tuition rates for freshmen, so the price will stay the same for four years or the length of their chosen academic program. The sponsor of the bill, Chicago Democrat Rep. Kevin Joyce, says there are two positive results of holding rates steady. It allows students and their parents to know what they are going to pay when they make financial plans and provides incentive for students to finish their undergraduate degree in four years or the time allotted for their program.

Joyce, a former high school football coach, says his former players brought the issue to his attention, saying they had to take on second jobs to pay for school or even drop out because they could not afford the ever-rising tuition cost.

While the law does provide some predictability for parents and students, university officials say it may cost them more in the long run. David Gross, a spokesman for Southern Illinois University, says because tuition cannot be raised throughout a student's career as a reaction to an unexpected expense, such as a jump in utility costs, universities have to consider the possibility of such expenses when they set the tuition for each incoming class.

University of Illinois spokesman Thomas Hardy agrees that the policy is being considered in budgeting. "I'm sure [Truth-in-

Tuition] is on the minds of our financial people and senior administrators, and certainly our board of trustees."

Joyce says that schools often use Truth-in-Tuition as an excuse when they raise costs for students, but the real problem is the lack of state funding for higher education. "There has been a shortage of state dollars going to them," Joyce says.

However, there is little hard data to back either side's argument. Diane Dean, an education professor at Illinois State University, hopes to change that. Dean is launching a research project to study the effects of Truth-in-Tuition on schools, students and the state.

Dean is looking for ways Illinois can implement the program more effectively. She plans to interview students, administrators and parents across the state as well as analyze statistical data. Dean is also going to compare Illinois with Georgia, which has its own variation on "truth in tuition." She hopes her findings can help Illinois, as well as other states considering tuition guarantees. She received an \$800,000 grant from the Lumina Foundation for Education for her research.

Dean says she doesn't want to become involved in political arguments. However, she agrees with Joyce that state cuts can make implementing programs such as Truth-in-Tuition difficult for schools trying to plan future budgets. "I think it is going to get a lot more notice now in these uncertain times," she says. "I don't know how you can have a guaranteed tuition without having a guaranteed appropriation."

Janey Dunn

U.S. Supreme Court decision affects federal campaigns in Illinois

The U.S. Supreme Court opened the door in January for corporations and labor unions to spend unlimited amounts of money on federal political campaigns. While the decision will not affect Illinois law, it will affect campaigns for federal office.

The ruling allows corporations and labor unions to spend without limit as long as they do it independently of the candidate they are backing. Labor unions and corporations are still barred from contributing directly to candidates.

The ruling will not change practices at the state level in Illinois because corporations and unions already are allowed to spend and contribute directly to candidates. However, they are limited to giving \$10,000 per election cycle to a candidate and up to \$20,000 to any political party or legislative caucus committee per election cycle.

"We are less restrictive than the federal [laws]. This [ruling] makes the fed a little less restrictive but not nearly as unrestricted as Illinois," says Kent Redfield, a professor emeritus at the University of Illinois

Springfield who is affiliated with the Illinois Campaign for Political Reform. Redfield adds that the decision will take power away from individual contributors, something he says has already happened in Illinois.

"If I am a congressman, and I know that my party is going to make big independent expenditures and the Chamber of Commerce is going to make big independent expenditures, then I would not be as concerned with contributions from individuals," he said.

President Barack Obama chastised the court for its decision during his State of the Union address. "With all due deference to separation of powers, last week the Supreme Court reversed a century of law that I believe will open the floodgates for special interests — including foreign corporations — to spend without limit in our elections," Obama said.

Ron Michaelson, political science professor at the University of Illinois Springfield, says the decision will affect the 2010 U.S. Senate race in Illinois. However, he says the ruling may not bring as much

change as opponents claim. "Frankly, I think there has been a lot of hyperbole about this decision. ... There has been a lot of angst," he says. "I just don't think the impact is going to be quite as great as people think. But we will have to wait and see."

Michaelson says the ruling does give opportunity to those who seek to chip away federal restrictions. He says corporations and unions may one day be able to contribute directly to candidates on the federal level. He adds that the recent decision is not a clear win for either Republicans or Democrats and will actually serve to weaken the power of the parties themselves.

Redfield says that the ruling does reduce the potential for future reform in Illinois because a law cannot be passed at the state level that will limit what unions and corporations can spend on their own. Redfield says the court's decision is a step in the wrong direction. "The federal [climate] will look more like Illinois. And I don't know of anyone that will tell you that's a good thing."

Janey Dunn

NIU plans to replace classroom where shooting occurred

Cole Hall, the Northern Illinois University building where a gunman killed five students in 2008, will be renovated so that the lecture hall where the murders occurred will never again be used for classroom space.

The renovation will be funded through \$8 million released in late January by Gov. Pat Quinn, along with an additional \$2.3 million to plan for a new lecture hall in a neighboring building, Stevens Hall. The funds were part of the state's capital spending plan approved in July 2009.

Soon after the February 14, 2008, shooting, then-Gov. Rod Blagojevich proposed that the building be knocked down. "The option on the table was tear it down and replace it with a very expensive building, and that was creating external pressure and stress that the campus simply didn't need at that time," says NIU provost Ray Alden.

Northern surveyed students, faculty, staff and alumni in a two-step process to

find consensus on the best option. More than two-thirds of approximately 8,000 people surveyed opposed tearing down the building. Instead, the majority supported the "repurpose" of the classroom where the shooting occurred and the remodeling of the other side of the building, Alden says.

As of early February, it had not been determined how the space would be reconfigured, but Alden pointed to such possibilities as computer laboratory, studio or office space.

Cole Hall and the adjacent classroom, which, along with the rest of the building, have been closed since the shooting, each seated 500 students, he says. Those lecture halls were twice as large as the next biggest classroom on campus.

"It's been very difficult for us, the loss of Cole. In any given year, over 12,000 students had classes in one or the other of those two classrooms, so we had to reallocate classes all over campus, which has been less than convenient for faculty and students because Cole Hall is in the middle of campus," Alden says.

A new lecture hall that will be constructed as an addition to Stevens Hall, Alden says, will replace the Cole lecture hall. Like Cole, the building is near a privately funded memorial to the five slain students.

Stevens Hall is also getting a major renovation. "Stevens has been on the capital list as our top priority for over a decade," Alden says. It's also a building that clearly needs to be renovated. We've actually had radiators explode, and they're using a utility closet as a computer lab."

Construction at Cole Hall is expected to begin in late summer. The new lecture hall is projected to open in fall 2011.

Republican state Rep. Robert Pritchard of Hinckley represents the district where NIU is located. He says he was pleased with the announcement of the release of the money but pointed out that it did not address other pressing needs at NIU and other state institutions. "We've got some serious issues. While the Cole Hall release is exciting news, it doesn't really deal with meat and potatoes of the overall higher education issue."

Maureen Foertsch McKinney

EDUCATION

Illinois seeks funds from Race to the Top

Illinois in April will learn its fate in a competition against 40 other states for federal education funds as President Barack Obama's administration announces \$4 billion in Race to the Top awards.

The education reform initiative calls on districts to address four areas: revamping standards and assessments, developing student growth data systems, rewarding quality teachers and improving underachieving schools.

"[Race to the Top] is identifying all of the key elements that we really need to turn our schools around, to close the achievement gap," says Sen. Kimberly Lightford, a Maywood Democrat. More than 350 Illinois districts have committed to implementing the reforms.

Gov. Pat Quinn signed two bills in January that could help Illinois in its efforts to obtain up to \$500 million through Race to the Top grants.

Senate Bill 315 makes student growth a key factor in evaluations of teachers, principals and superintendents. Under the law, 50 percent of an educator's performance rating will be determined by student achievement. The law also requires the State Board of Education to develop systems for tracking the evaluations and linking them to student growth and teacher retention.

Sen. Bradley Burzynski, a Clare Republican, likes the idea of Race to the Top, but he says he opposes the new laws because they give too much power to the Illinois State Board of Education.

"I do think we need to have a better way of evaluating teachers and tying that to student assessment, and that's what our Race to the Top application is all about."

But Burzynski argues that some downstate schools would likely put more money into complying with Race to the Top legislation than they would get from the federal government.

"This funding won't go on forever. There will be an unfunded mandate put on our school districts," Burzynski says. "That's what we want? To start a program, get a quarter of the way through it and then quit it. So we've spent all of that money on nothing, except ... at that point, you're so far down the road that you've got to continue."

Quinn also signed **SB 616**, allowing nonprofit organizations such as Teach for America to offer alternative teacher certification programs independent of universities.

Lightford says the measure will be a key factor in recruiting quality teachers to low-performing schools. In alternative certification programs, new teachers would be trained from the start to deal with underperforming, sometimes unruly classrooms. "We're really needing these [alternative certification] programs to help us out in this area. ... Let's target our new teachers. Let's look at these programs that are already working."

The Illinois legislature enacted two more laws in 2009 that could better position the state's application. **SB 1828** created the framework for a longitudinal education data system that traces test scores and graduation rates as well as college and career readiness or success (see *Illinois Issues*, June 2009, page 25). **SB 612** raised the state's cap on charter schools to 120, double the previous limit.

Rachel Wells

Report calls for more funding for Latinos

As the fastest-growing ethnic group in the state, Latinos have been proportionately hardest hit by the state's ailing financial position, a recent report contends.

"We're really trying to articulate in this report that there is a need for greater investment of resources in the Latino community," says Sylvia Puente, executive director of the Latino Policy Forum, the organization that produced the November 2009 report *The Blueprint for Latino Investment: A Latino Legislative Agenda*. The report was commissioned by the Illinois Legislative Latino Caucus Foundation.

Between 2000 and 2008, the Latino population in Illinois grew by 29 percent, accounting for 90 percent of the state's population growth, the report notes, "so a maintenance of service really represents a nearly 30 percent cut," says Puente, who is also a member of the *Illinois Issues* advisory board. "We're suggesting that we believe this is the threshold at which the Latino community needs to be funded at in order to have equity and access and parity for our growing community."

The policy forum "looked at specific areas so elected leaders, civic leaders can point to certain areas where they can really make a difference," says policy analyst Martin Torres.

The report outlines several areas of concern related to education, housing, health care, human services and the work force. The key recommendation, Puente says, is the need for greater emphasis on early childhood education. According to the report, Latinos account for 25 percent of Illinois' children under the age of 5, and between 2000 and 2008, the number of Latino children under 5 grew by 27 percent.

The report contends that at least 25 percent of grants and subsidies in Illinois should be directed to Latino children.

Other key areas addressed include a desire that grant funding be increased for state agencies that work with Latinos and that Latino representation among state employees and boards and commissions be beefed up.

"We are really calling for a realignment of resources for the Latino community," Puente says.

Other suggestions in the report:

- Expand capacity to enroll more children in early childhood education programs.
- Target resources to alleviate overcrowding in Illinois public schools, particularly in low-income school districts.
- Increase the share of bilingual and bicultural teachers and administrators.
- Require all public post-secondary institutions to increase Latino graduation rates by 50 percent in 10 years.
- Provide more resources to high-minority low-income school districts to ensure all teachers are highly qualified.
- Direct resources to public colleges and universities to increase enrollment retention and recruitment of Latino students.
- Create incentives to increase affordable housing.
- Boost funding for parenting and teen pregnancy prevention programs.
- Improve the linguistic and cultural competency of the juvenile justice system.
- Hike the proportion of state contracts directed to Latino-owned businesses.

The report is available online at <http://www.latinopolicyforum.org>.

Maureen Foertsch McKinney

Study focuses on water needs

A regional group of officials for the northeastern segment of Illinois developed a comprehensive plan for water use that calls for increased conservation.

In late January, the Regional Water Supply Planning Group, which comprises representatives from 11 counties, voted to approve the plan, which was coordinated by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning and funded by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

"This is a highly specific plan directed at state, regional, county, municipal and other public agencies responsible for ensuring adequate supplies of clean water," said planning group chairwoman Bonnie Thomson Carter in a prepared release. Carter is also a Lake County Board member and president of the Lake County Forest Preserve. "Based on the data, it is clear that continued rapid population growth and economic activity will put a strain on the region's current supply, and significant shortages could result without coordinated action to implement this new water plan."

The region consumes 1.48 billion gallons of water per day, and most of that (69 percent) is drawn from Lake Michigan. Groundwater and rivers are the other source. Demand is expected to increase by as much as 64 percent by 2050. At that point, the region would use 2.43 billion gallons per day.

Among conservation measures suggested is the reuse of the graywater that results when residents wash dishes, launder clothes and bathe. Other ideas include use of new high-

efficiency clothes washers and toilets, auditing water systems for leaks and retrofitting residential plumbing.

Other means would be to prohibit actions that waste water and to base fees for water on the actual cost of obtaining, treating and delivering it.

"If the cost of water more closely reflected the cost of delivery and/or its value, maybe people would be more conservative; maybe they wouldn't be flooding their yards every other day with expensive, drinkable-to-potable-standards water," says Tim Loftus, the principal planner at CMAP who serves as project director for the Regional Water Supply Planning Group.

Another recommendation called for the region to conduct a public campaign to inform adults and schoolchildren of the need for water conservation.

The plan also cautioned that the region's shallow aquifer system is being polluted by road salt and other contaminants. It recommends the use of alternate methods to de-ice roads.

Meanwhile, "conservation coordinators" should be designated by municipal and regional officials, the plan suggests. The coordinators would be responsible for comprehensive water conservation and would work with public-water suppliers to analyze the potential of numerous conservation measures.

The regional planning group began meeting monthly in January 2007. Besides those from counties and municipalities, representatives included water suppliers and other business groups, environmentalists and academics.

The report is available online at <http://www.cmap.illinois.gov>.

Maureen Foertsch McKinney

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Suffragist, justice of the peace left her mark



Catharine Waugh McCulloch

Attorney. Suffragist. Illinois' first female justice of the peace. When Catharine Waugh McCulloch was born in 1862, no one could have predicted the influence she would have on Illinois history, but in her 83 years of life, McCulloch was all of these things and more.

"Writing the bill for women's suffrage is probably her greatest achievement," says Darien-based historian Leslie Goddard. "Women's suffrage bills were written and introduced in the 1890s, but they kept getting turned down by the Illinois legislature." Finally, to appease suffragists, the legislature agreed to allow women to vote for any office not established by the Illinois Constitution, such as school board positions. She saw this legal loophole and took advantage of it, introducing her suffrage bill, which fought for women's right to vote in presidential and local elections not constitutionally limited to male voters.

The bill became law in 1913.

"She was persistent," Goddard explains. "And in the middle of this, she was elected the first woman justice of the peace in Illinois," serving from 1907-1913. McCulloch also served as the legislative superintendent of the Illinois Equal Suffrage Association from 1890-1912.

"Catharine Waugh McCulloch was truly significant because she was very publicity-minded and was skilled at getting publicity for her cause," says Goddard. "When she was fighting for women's suffrage, she organized carloads of women into long trains that drove all over the state and spoke about suffrage. She focused on women's solidarity," and not only appealed to wealthy women but brought working women to the cause.

Influenced by her father, a farmer who often handled the legal claims of his neighbors, as well as her year of work at the Rockford law firm of Marshall and Taggart, McCulloch enrolled in the Union

"Writing the bill for women's suffrage is probably her greatest achievement."

— historian Leslie Goddard



McCulloch, right, is greeted after trip to Springfield to lobby for suffrage.

College of Law in 1885, which later became Northwestern University School of Law. She was admitted to the Illinois Bar in 1886 but was unable to get legal work in the Chicago area. She later joined in practice with her husband, Frank McCulloch.

Goddard learned of McCulloch while writing her dissertation at Northwestern University on the Women's Suffrage Movement. She began paying homage not only to her, but to other influential women suffragists, such as Frances Willard and Ida B. Wells, in her storytelling program, "Illinois and the Winning of Women's Suffrage."

McCulloch "really got the ball rolling for women's suffrage," says Goddard. "Illinois was the first major state with a large city that fought for women's suffrage. The women in the movement were big and well-known, like her. She was really smart and talented, and she made something remarkable happen."

Nicole Harbour

Contest at UIUC aims to battle e-waste

When it comes to technology, it seems that bigger and faster equates to better, and in this ever-evolving and fast-paced field, many cell phones, computers, televisions and MP3 players that are less than two years old are being left in the dust for newer, fresher models. But what is to be done with the discarded electronic devices? The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign's 2010 International E-Waste Design Competition aims to answer that question.

"E-waste [electronic waste] is an international problem," says William Bullock, a professor of industrial design in the School of Art and Design at UIUC and an education and research coordinator for the Sustainable Electronics Initiative, a consortium dedicated to the development and implementation of a more sustainable system for designing, producing, remanufacturing and recycling electronic devices. It is part of the Illinois Sustainability Center at UIUC. "And while it seems like it's more of a problem in the United States, a lot of e-waste ends up on foreign shores."

The April competition, which is being sponsored by Dell computers and Wal-Mart stores, is in its second year at UIUC and is expanding from the campus to an international event. It was developed in conjunction with a class on e-waste issues and sustainability that Bullock began teaching in 2009.

Participants will compete in one of two categories: "designer/artist," for entries focusing on more aesthetic elements and factors of human design, or "technical/geek," for submissions that use electronic components to create functional devices. All participants will submit their projects to the competition Web site by video for judging by a panel consisting of representatives from Fortune 500 companies.

"By having participants submit their projects by video, we reduce waste," Bullock explains.

Participants must be 18 years of age or older and be current college students or have graduated since May 2006. They can compete as individuals or in teams. Six winning teams will share \$16,000 in prize money.

Last year, more than 80 students, divided among 21 teams, competed for \$15,000 in tuition support and other prizes.

"I know that William [Bullock] has already heard from China, Korea, Great Britain and Mexico," says Joy Scrogum, an information specialist at the Illinois Sustainable Technology Center. "We are really hoping that the competition brings people from all over the world together to find a solution to the e-waste problem."

"I hope that this year, we're really able to show, through some of the best and brightest minds in the world, what you can do with this [e-waste]," says Bullock. "I think it's 'e-opportunity,' not e-waste. Electronic companies are now being held more accountable for recycling, and I think this requirement, along with this competition, are inspiring more companies to design less wastefully."

Award announcements will take place April 21 on the campus, and finalists' videos will be presented from April 21-25 as part of the International E-Waste Video Festival.

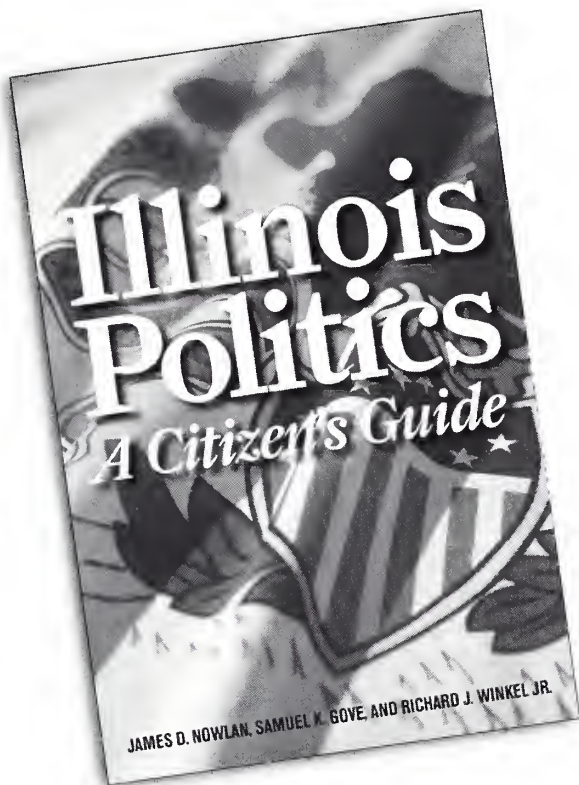
For more information, visit www.ewaste.illinois.edu.

Nicole Harbour

Photograph courtesy of the Sustainable Electronics Initiative at UIUC



Jiana Seo and Jennifer Kuo discuss their idea for reusing computer parts as planters at last year's e-waste competition.



BOOK REVIEW

All about Illinois politics

Projecting trends in Illinois politics can be tricky, if not futile. But it was a fairly safe bet in 1995 to predict that the suburbs in the collar counties around Chicago and Cook County would be the dominant force in Illinois politics and government.

When authors James Nowlan and Samuel Gove wrote *Illinois Politics and Government: The Expanding Metropolitan Frontier*, Republicans controlled both chambers of the General Assembly — dominated by suburban legislators — and the party had held the governor's seat for two decades. In addition, the 1994 election had sent Republicans to Springfield to hold all six constitutional offices.

Now, a decade and a half later, the authors have revised their 1996 book. Joined by former state Sen. Richard Winkel Jr., Nowlan and Gove have published *Illinois Politics: A Citizen's Guide* (University of Illinois Press, 2010.) In the preface, the authors, who are associated with the Institute of Government and Public Affairs, say the intent of the new book is to provide readers with a "systematic overview of the way practical politics operates in

and affects Illinois state government."

They also want to address a couple of points made in the earlier work that haven't panned out as expected: that efforts to reduce political corruption had, at the time, apparently met with some success and that in the new century, the political landscape would tilt more toward the "expanding metropolitan frontier."

With one governor in prison for corruption and another impeached and set to go on trial in June for corruption, plus the prosecution of sundry other officials and political insiders, the authors admit their earlier speculation was in error.

"Nor has the political landscape tilted toward the suburbs, with the possible exception of increased population. Indeed, the political tilt appears to be toward the City of Chicago, though it has but half the population of the suburban collar that surrounds the city."

By 2008, shifts in demographics and attitudes led voters to elect Democrats to all constitutional offices and to majorities in both the state House and Senate.

The authors look at the major players — the parties, the special interests, the media — in the context of the state's political culture, which they describe as individualistic. They define it as a culture in which "self-interest dominates and political corruption is tolerated." Nearly constant electioneering and limited restraints on financing campaigns have fed that culture.

Weaving early and recent history, the book offers a primer on the functions of the three branches of government: executive, legislative and judicial. It also takes into account what the authors call the "intergovernmental web." With more than 6,000 units of local government — from fire protection to parks to cemeteries to mass transit and on and on — Illinois leads the nation. Throw in the

complex mandates of the federal government to administer such programs as clean air, clean water and K-12 education, and Illinois is "at the heart of a sticky web of governments. ... The federal and local governments constrain, support, complement and frustrate the state government."

The book attempts to give citizens an inside look at this state's government and the politics that guide it. Pointing to a 2008 Associated Press investigation, Illinois is the "most average state" in the nation, based on state rankings on 21 indicators such as demographics, education achievement and economic mix. The authors assess the state overall as "strong but not achieving."

"It is possible that the combination of our individualistic culture and the dispiriting blemishes caused by unusual levels of public corruption contribute to our generally average performance as a state."

The authors hope future leaders will take note and meet the challenge to raise Illinois' score.

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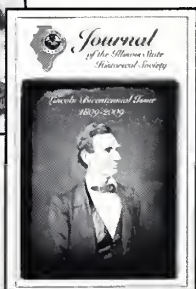
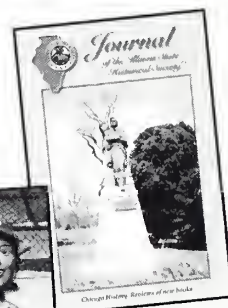
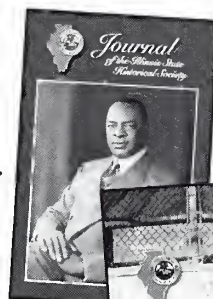
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THIS ACCOUNT IS NOW
OVERDUE

Unpaid bills

The state's inability — or unwillingness — to meet its commitments is simply unfair, some say

by Jamey Dunn

Southern Illinois pharmacy owner Tom Miller had to refinance his store to avoid bankruptcy while he waited on the state of Illinois to pay the money it owed him. “The state darn near destroyed us — destroyed me and almost destroyed other pharmacies,” he says.

Miller, also a Methodist minister, says his faith helped him through the financial turmoil. “We stayed in business only through the grace of God.” At one point Miller was waiting up to 270 days to be reimbursed for the Medicaid prescriptions he filled.

He has cut back on advertising and services to customers, such as offering in-store credit and unlimited free home deliveries, at his Marion store, which has been in business 17 years. “I have probably lost 25 percent of my business due to the state’s business with me,” Miller says. He adds that the stress of not getting state payments when about 65 percent of his business is customers on Medicaid has put a strain on his pharmacy, his marriage and his health.

Many independent pharmacy owners are weighing whether they can keep accepting Medicaid patients if Illinois continues to pay its bills late. Miller and others say it is unfair that the state, through irresponsible budget decisions, has passed such a difficult moral choice on to its vendors. “It’s revolting,” he says. “My heart hurts, but you cannot give everything to everybody.”

Jay Koch’s business did go bankrupt last fall. His United Science Industries,

which was located near Mount Vernon and had employed as many as 100 people, worked with the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency to clean up leaking underground storage tanks. To cover the delay in state payments to his customers — which sometimes stretched nearly two years — he extended them credit. But along with tight credit from banks, interest rate charges ate up nearly one-fifth of his revenue, and he was forced to call it quits.

“There aren’t any scruples about how the state deals with the business community,” Koch says.

A pile of overdue bills is nothing new for Illinois. The state has struggled to keep up with payments for years. But a backlog of more than \$3.5 billion is making the situation dire. At press time, Carol Knowles, spokeswoman for Comptroller Dan Hynes, says the oldest unpaid bill was from September 1. A report released by Hynes says that if drastic action isn’t taken, Illinois will head into the next fiscal year with the largest amount of unpaid bills it has ever carried over from the previous fiscal year.

Photograph by Linda Anderson



The school districts of Tremont and LeRoy are displaying the amount the state owes them on signs outside their schools.

As with citizens who don't pay their bills, Illinois' credit rating is suffering. Moody's Investor Services downgraded the state's bond rating to the second lowest in the country, just above California. That means Illinois will have to pay higher interest rates on any loans it might take out to help catch up on late payments.

Those waiting for money from the state see the consequences daily. People working for those organizations, by and large, are trying to keep those in need safe, treat the sick, educate students and hang on to their jobs.

The recession has compounded the issue. Many nonprofit social service providers also are receiving less money in charitable donations.

The state of Illinois itself does very little of what people would consider social work. Most of it, ranging from care for the developmentally disabled and the elderly to foster care coordination to addiction counseling, is contracted to various organizations the state pays. Illinois is legally obligated to pay these providers. For some, the money from the state comprises the majority of their operating budgets.

Judith Gethner, Illinois Partners for Human Services coalition manager, says the directors of some social service organizations are using their personal credit cards to keep their operations afloat. Many others are taking out loans to pay their basic costs. Those lines of credit are not bottomless, and in some cases banks are not even willing to give loans. "When our collateral is the state money, they laugh at us," Gethner says.

Organizations that provide care to certain populations, such as the developmentally disabled, are required to maintain certain staff-to-client ratios. So if layoffs occur, waiting lists grow. According to Don Moss, coordinator of the Illinois Human Services Coalition, treatment centers for the developmentally disabled have waiting lists as long as 17,000 people. "No one new is getting in unless someone dies," he says.

Gethner says cuts in one area often shift costs elsewhere. "Our clients end up at the emergency room of the hospital. Please don't tell me the state doesn't pay one way or another because they do."

Mark Rossi, chief operating officer at Hopedale Medical Complex, says people are turning to emergency rooms for care in

greater numbers because they do not have access to primary care doctors. He says that while emergency rooms must accept Medicaid patients, individual doctors aren't forced to. Many have opted out of the program to avoid the headache of extra paperwork and late payments. Rossi added that having to go to the emergency room for all of their health care "makes people feel like second-class citizens" and results in "higher cost, worse care."

Rossi says that is why the nursing home that is part of his health care complex stopped accepting Medicaid patients in 2001. He added that if the state doesn't start making payments more quickly for employee health care, doctors might soon turn away state workers as well. "At some point, some hospitals may say, 'We are sorry; we don't take [state insurance coverage].'"

Schools throughout Illinois are also feeling the pinch. A few are making sure their communities know the state is not paying them on time. The central Illinois districts of Tremont and LeRoy are displaying the amount the state owes them on signs outside their schools. Gary Tipsord, superintendent of LeRoy schools, says his district has a unique opportunity to inform the public. "By being a public school, we have the ear of our community," he says. "My public has got to know."

Like others awaiting their payments, school districts are taking out loans to cover operating expenses, making cuts and considering layoffs. Don Beard, superintendent of Tremont schools, says his district, which is owed more than \$250,000, is considering laying off some aides and teachers. The district also might delay buying textbooks and computers. Tipsord says it is unfair for the state to shirk its financial obligations when local governments are keeping up their end of the deal. "They've paid their property tax. The community of LeRoy has done their part. They have done all that they can do."

Colleges also are scrambling to find ways to pay their bills. University of Illinois Interim President Stanley Ikenberry announced at a board of trustees meeting in Chicago that the university is considering increasing tuition by 9 percent to 18 percent. As of early February, the state owed the U of I more than \$400 million.

The U of I has already laid off some staff and instituted a hiring freeze and fur-

lough days, which are unpaid days off, as part of a plan to cut \$82 million from its budget. "Furloughs are the very painful and highly visible last resort," university spokesman Thomas Hardy says.

Southern Illinois University has pledged not to make any layoffs before June. The state owes SIU \$125 million. The school is seeking borrowing power from the legislature through **Senate Bill 642**. At present, public universities are not allowed to borrow to fund their operating budgets. "We think that we are at the end of our ability to raise tuition rates much, if any at all," SIU spokesman David Gross says.

Smaller state schools are cutting expenses such as travel and deferring maintenance, hiring and any large spending. However, many will still be weighing tuition increases when considering their budgets for the next fiscal year.

When the economy goes down, the demand for services goes up. Illinois community colleges are at their highest enrollment levels in more than a decade. More students mean more tuition revenue, but larger numbers also mean a greater demand for resources.

Judy Erwin, executive director of the State Board of Higher Education, says residents are returning to school because they have lost their jobs or are trying to get a competitive edge in a weak job market.

Rising unemployment rates have also sent more people to Illinois libraries to use the Internet for job searches. Families who have had to cut their budgets are heading to libraries to get books and movies for their kids. Yet, library systems are only receiving about 35 percent of the money they usually get from the state, says Joe Harris, executive director of the Shawnee Library System in Carterville.

Social service organizations also are experiencing increased demand. "When unemployment goes up, so does addiction and so does abuse," Gethner says.



Gov. Pat Quinn's budget director, David Vaught, says the state's mounting debt adds urgency to crafting the budget for the next fiscal year. "We're a debtor, and that's not a good thing." To get the budget back on track, the state needs to make cuts, raise taxes, borrow and get help from the federal government, according to Vaught.

In his State of the Union address, President Barack Obama called for a jobs bill that could send some money to the states. A version of the bill has passed in the U.S. House of Representatives, but the concept has met Republican opposition.

A tax increase in Illinois has no bipartisan support. Illinois Republicans are calling for cuts and economies such as reducing the benefits new state employees get from the pension systems and switching Medicaid to a managed care plan before

they will consider a tax increase. Quinn supports both pension and Medicaid reforms.

But such proposed reforms would not necessarily translate to immediate savings that could be used toward overdue bills. Tom Johnson, president of the Taxpayers' Federation of Illinois, says Illinois politicians' inability to take the long view has led to the financial mess the state is in today. Johnson was a member of the Taxpayer Action Board, an advisory group Quinn created to propose ways to address the state's budget deficit. Many of the group's recommendations involved systematic policy changes that could require years to implement.

November elections loom over budgeting negotiations and make possible outcomes unpredictable. The Illinois Senate passed a proposed tax increase last year, but the measure failed in the House.

Political scientist Kent Redfield says he doubts the General Assembly will pass a tax increase before November because

House Speaker Michael Madigan is protecting House Democrats and will not call such a difficult vote before an election. Madigan spokesman Steve Brown dismisses the idea that the power to increase taxes lies solely with his boss. "[Addressing the state's unpaid bills] is going to need to be a cooperative effort with the legislature and the governor."

"I don't think we are going to have a big grand budget deal with bipartisan support," says Redfield, an emeritus professor at the University of Illinois Springfield. "As long as they can keep kicking the can down the road, they will keep doing it." He added that a major event, such as a state university closing its doors, could create enough public pressure to prompt a tax increase.

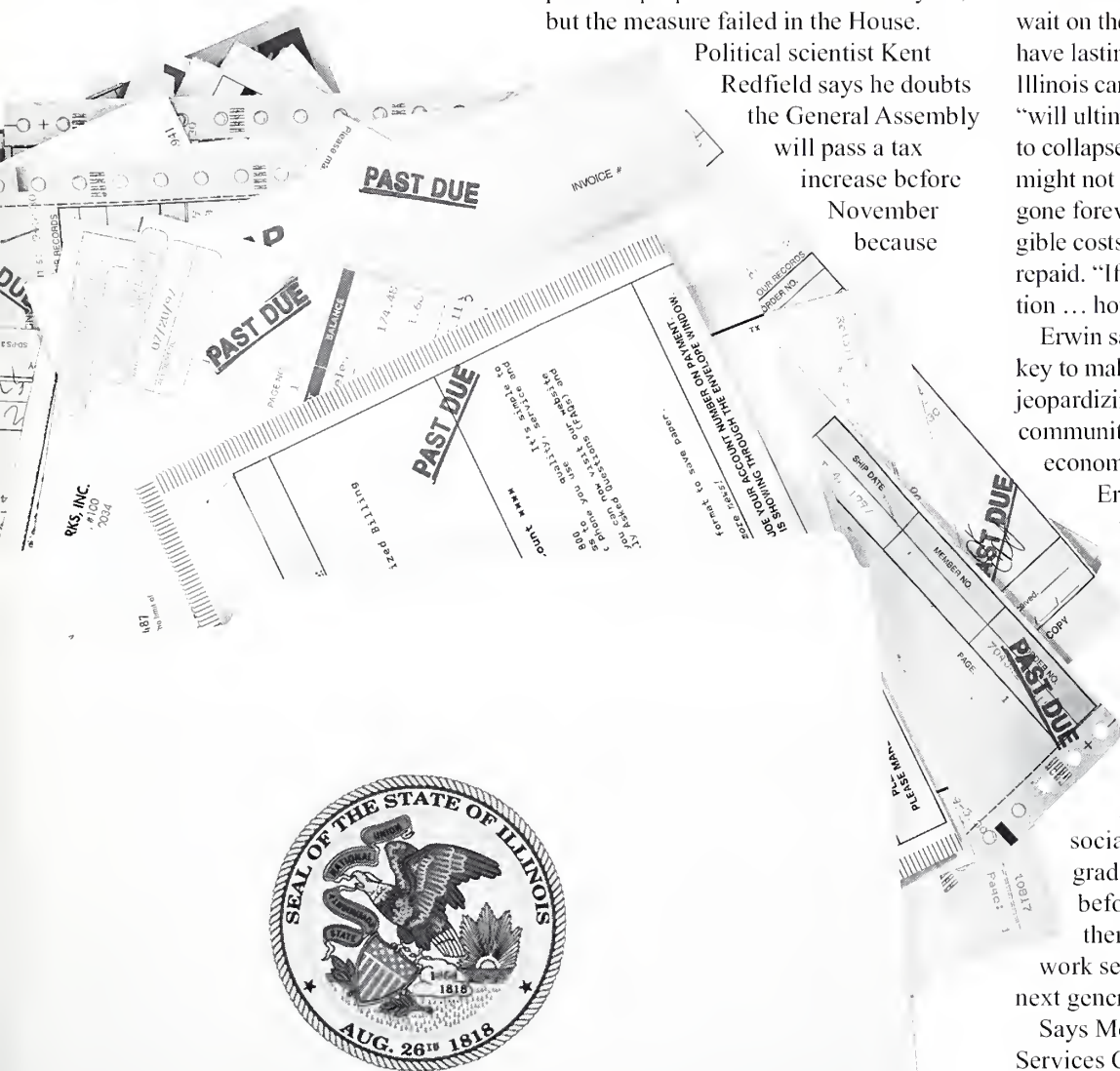
The cost-cutting measures that organizations are making to get by while they wait on their money from the state could have lasting effects. Vaught says that if Illinois can't pay its bills more quickly, it "will ultimately cause some organizations to collapse. ... If they do disappear, they might not come back at all. They may be gone forever." He added that the less tangible costs to individuals might never be repaid. "If you have a low-quality education ... how do you bring that back?"

Erwin says an educated workforce is key to making Illinois competitive, and jeopardizing public universities and community colleges also puts the state's economic recovery at risk.

Eric Foster, chief operating officer for the Illinois Alcoholism and Drug Dependence Association, says turning away clients means they may never come back for help. "Likely they will go back out and use. And once they go back out and use, the chances of them coming back will decrease."

Many who were laid off in social services were recent college graduates and may leave the field before money comes back to hire them, Foster says. So, the social work sector could be alienating the next generation of potential workers.

Says Moss of the Illinois Human Services Coalition, "It's going to be a long haul before things return to sub-normalcy." □





Too close to call

Brady leads Dillard by about 400 votes, raising the recount question

by Adriana Colindres



In the wee hours of February 3, as Republican state Sen. Bill Brady spoke to supporters and claimed victory as the party's 2010 gubernatorial nominee, he compared himself to a coach.

"We're not done," he advised the crowd in his hometown of Bloomington. "We're just through the first half of this game."

That's one way of looking at the outcome of the February 2 Republican primary for governor, which, as of press time, showed Brady with a paper-thin lead over fellow GOP state Sen. Kirk Dillard of Hinsdale.

But other sports lingo might better describe the unusually close results: This election looks like it could head into overtime.

Brady expects that by the time all of the votes are tabulated, including the ones from valid absentee and provisional ballots, he will remain in first place among the Republican hopefuls for governor.

"Our attorneys tell us we're likely to pick up a few votes when it's all said and done because the absentees and the provisionals break, generally, the same way the election did," Brady says.

As of this writing, Brady led Dillard by barely more than 400 votes, and Dillard had not conceded the race. Dillard also hadn't yet tipped his hand on whether he would seek a recount. According to figures compiled by the Associated Press, Brady's share of the vote was 20.3 percent, compared with 20.2 percent for Dillard.

"In a race this close, it's important that every vote count," Dillard said three days after the election.

The official winner of the Republican primary will face Democrat Pat Quinn in the November general election.

Most political observers were stunned by Brady's strong showing among the field of six GOP candidates — seven if you include Bob Schillerstrom, who withdrew too late to have his name removed from the election ballot.

Pundits had predicted the Republican winner would come from a group of three: businessman and former state party chairman Andy McKenna, 2002 gubernatorial candidate and ex-Illinois Attorney General Jim Ryan and Dillard, who was endorsed by former Gov. Jim Edgar. McKenna, in particular, flooded the airwaves with negative political ads on television.

"McKenna spent a lot of money the last week [of the campaign] beating up on Kirk Dillard and Jim Ryan, and to a smaller extent, they replied toward McKenna," says Edgar, now a distinguished fellow with the University of Illinois' Institute of Government and Public Affairs. "But nobody beat up on Bill Brady because nobody thought he was a serious threat here in the last week. Well, that kind of left the opening, when it got real tight between those three, that he was able to kind of slip by."

Brady also held a geographical advantage because he was the lone candidate from downstate Illinois, Edgar says. The rest of the Republicans live in Chicago or its suburbs.

Three of them, Dillard, Ryan and Schillerstrom, make their homes in heavily Republican DuPage County. Dillard says that was a huge factor in the way primary votes were split.

Though Schillerstrom had taken himself out of the race by Election Day, he still garnered more than 7,000 votes. Dillard believes a significant number of those votes would have gone to him, enabling him to win "pretty easily" if Schillerstrom's name had been dropped from the ballot.

"And obviously, I would have won very, very handily if Jim Ryan was not in the race," Dillard adds. "DuPage [County] definitely was in the circular firing squad, cannibalized itself. No one stepped up with authority in DuPage County to pare the field down. That's a shame."

Brady wasn't surprised by his performance on primary night.

"Our strategy all along was to deliver the base. We launched a grass-roots effort

several months ago," he said. "That grass-roots effort launched hundreds of volunteers who were working to identify the people who supported me and make sure they got out to vote."

Brady says his campaign didn't have "millions and millions" to spend, so his political advertising budget targeted downstate, rather than the pricier Chicago media market.

The groundwork paid off. Brady dominated in downstate Illinois, winning in more than 70 counties. He fared worse in Cook County and the surrounding collar counties, placing a consistent fifth.

Dillard says his campaign's internal polling accurately gauged the tightness of the race, showing that he and Brady were virtually tied but giving Dillard a narrow edge.

"I knew the race would be close," Dillard says. "Obviously, I never dreamed it would be this close. This is like right-out-of-the-movies close."

None of the Republican candidates "seemed to take the bull by the horns and charge out in front," says Ron Michaelson, a political science professor at the University of Illinois Springfield. "Everybody was appealing to different constituencies, and it resulted in a situation where Brady, who looked like he was lagging fourth in the polls going down the stretch, may turn out to be a close winner."

Indeed, public polls generally didn't put Brady in the upper tier of candidates.

Polling expert Richard Schuldt, director of the UIS Survey Research Office, says that the Pollster.com Web site provides a look at three public polls conducted in mid-January or later. Two of those polls identified the three leading GOP candidates as McKenna, Dillard and Ryan, with McKenna holding the No. 1 slot. The third poll, from Public Policy Polling, put Dillard in first place and included Brady in the top three, knocking Ryan down to fourth.

All three polls listed 17 percent of respondents as "undecided."



State Sen. Bill Brady of Bloomington focused his campaign for the Republican gubernatorial nomination on downstate Illinois.

Schuldt offers a couple of possible reasons why the polls mostly overlooked Brady. They might not have accurately identified "likely voters," and they might have mistakenly estimated voter turnout, he says.

Further, Schuldt says, the undecided voters, along with others, could have been influenced by the tremendous number of political advertisements that played on TV and radio during the week before the election. Last-minute shifts in voter sentiment aren't captured in polls "because they are one-shot snapshots at a given point in time."

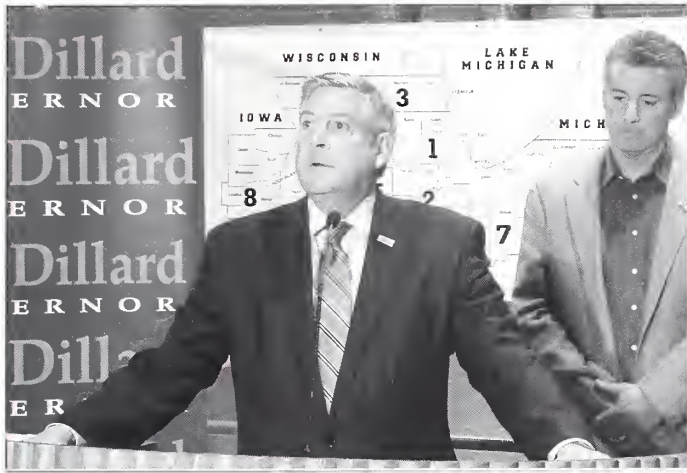
"There's more movement in a primary election, and particularly when you don't have much time for campaigning and voters know less about the candidates," he adds.

The Survey Research Office, located within the Center for State Policy and Leadership, conducts polling for government agencies and nonprofit organizations.

Considering the narrow margin by which Brady appears to lead Dillard, it is possible that Dillard will decide to seek a recount of votes, says Michaelson, who was executive director of the State Board of Elections from 1976 to 2003.

Nothing becomes official until the State Board of Elections certifies the statewide results on March 5, Michaelson says. Candidates who want to initiate recount proceedings must file the paperwork within five business days of the certification. If that happens, a resolution might not come for months.

Deciding whether to pursue a recount likely won't be easy for Dillard, who has



State Sen. Kirk Dillard faced several competitors from the Chicago area — including two from his home county — in his bid for the nomination.

pledged to support Brady if he emerges as the party's official nominee.

"When you come so close, you kind of owe it to your supporters, you owe it to your contributors, you owe it to yourself to exhaust all of your remedies, to make sure that this is really the right result," Michaelson says. "But on the other hand, by doing that, you are delaying the effort to coalesce behind the winner and get your act together for the fall. Obviously, if Brady's going to be the nominee, he's going to be the underdog."

Several analysts predict that Republicans all across the United States will do well in the 2010 elections.

"It's Political Science 101," says David Yepsen, who heads the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute at Southern Illinois University Carbondale. "The Democrats have got everything in Washington. The Democrats have everything in Springfield. The party in power, at a time when voters are this angry, is going to take a hit."

Still, some political observers suggest that Brady — an anti-abortion, pro-gun Republican — is "too conservative" to win election as governor in Illinois, which has become increasingly Democratic over the years.

Others say that isn't necessarily true.

"If you look across the 50 states, in terms of voting patterns, 'blue' states will very often elect a Republican as governor, and 'red' states will often elect a Democrat as governor — sometimes people who are fairly liberal or conservative — because there are other statewide issues, and personality and image play a stronger role than in Senate contests," says Tari Renner, a political science professor at

been on the economy, job creation and reducing the tax burden. Frankly, I think Illinois is a center-right state."

He plans to spotlight his policy differences with Quinn, especially Quinn's proposal to boost the state income tax by 50 percent.

"I want to cut taxes so we can generate more business investment in Illinois and more jobs for Illinois families," says Brady, who also has called for 10 percent across-the-board cuts to the state budget.

He adds: "We've got to deconstruct and reconstruct a budget that actually provides a surplus so we can pay down the backlog of unpaid bills but live within our means."

Cutting that much from the budget would be difficult, Edgar says.

"There's some programs you can't cut because people will die," he says. "What might work in business doesn't always work in government."

Yet Edgar believes the main issue in the general election will be Quinn's performance as chief executive. That could benefit the GOP candidate, regardless of whether it's Brady or Dillard.

"If it's Bill Brady, who might be philosophically more to the right than most Illinois voters, that may not enter into it as much as what do people think about Pat Quinn, the kind of job he is doing," Edgar says.

Even so, Brady, who ran unsuccessfully for the GOP nomination in 2006, would face challenges as the Republican nominee. For instance, he isn't well-known in populous northeastern Illinois.

Dillard says Brady would be hampered by the fact that his running mate, lieu-

tenant governor hopeful Jason Plummer of Edwardsville, also lives south of Interstate 80.

Brady isn't shy about brandishing his conservative credentials.

"I'm a Reagan conservative, there's no question about it," he says. "But I think my strength and focus has always

tenant governor hopeful Jason Plummer of Edwardsville, also lives south of Interstate 80.

"They'll have to find a way to connect with suburban voters," Dillard says.

James Nowlan, a senior fellow at the Institute of Government and Public Affairs, expects Democrats to portray Brady and Plummer as "yokels" from downstate "who don't understand the challenges of suburbia and metropolitan Chicago."

Top Republican legislators say they will have no problems unifying behind their candidate for governor, whether that turns out to be Brady or Dillard. House GOP Leader Tom Cross, who backed McKenna in the primary, says he will be "100 percent behind the nominee." Senate GOP Leader Christine Radogno, who made no endorsement for governor in the primary, says either Brady or Dillard would make a good governor.

Brady's perspective is that of a businessman, Radogno says. "When he talks about jobs, when he talks about taxes, he's looking at it from the outside. That's his frame of reference, even though he's obviously been in the legislature for some time."

Dillard brings to the table "an exceptional knowledge of how state government works," Radogno says. "His default position is: How can we do things from the inside?"

No matter who wins the governorship in November, Edgar believes that man will be in for a rough time because of the state's relentless financial woes.

"I don't think there's any time in the history, at least my history, of this state that it's more important who is elected governor," he says.

Edgar says he told Dillard that if he ends up losing a close primary race to Brady, "the only consolation is, I am convinced by not being elected governor of the state of Illinois, you'll live at least six years longer."

"I'm not sure that comforted him a whole lot, but I think it's very true. I do think the next governor, if the next governor's going to do the job, is going to probably wonder: Why did I ever run for this office?" □

Adriana Colindres is a Springfield-based free-lance writer.



Disinfection dissatisfaction

The water reclamation district in Chicagoland is the only major treatment agency in the nation that does not disinfect most of its wastewater. But the district also empties the water into one-of-a-kind streams

by Rachel Wells

Paddlers canoe under Chicago's Madison Street Bridge during a 7.25-mile canoe and kayak race that is held annually on the Chicago River.

Fairy tales aside, ugly ducklings don't become beautiful swans — biology just won't have it. Likewise, transforming a sewage canal into a lush and lazy river may be a bit unrealistic. At least that's the position of Chicago's sewage handlers when it comes to disinfection and recreation on the city's manufactured waterways.

The Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago is unique because it's the only major treatment agency in the nation that does not disinfect most of its wastewater. But the district also empties the water into one-of-a-kind streams: 78 miles of the Chicago Area Waterway System are artificial, and 70 percent of the flow comes from sewers.

"It's like putting bike riders on the Dan Ryan Expressway. Just because it's there doesn't mean we should shut it down so bike riders can be on it," says Jill Horist, public affairs manager for the reclamation district.

However, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency argues that if people are going to be on the water, the district must make an effort to keep them safe.

"Most of the waterway that runs through that system is human waste in origin. We know that people are recreating on those waterways," says Rob Sulski, Illinois EPA water pollution programs manager. "We know that if you treat an effluent down to 400 [fecal coliforms per 100 mL], that you are killing enough human pathogens to reduce the risk to those recreators."

As of now, the reclamation district discharges filtered — but not disinfected — wastewater into the waterways with bacterial counts between 700 and 340,000 fecal coliforms per 100 mL. Not all of that bacteria is harmful to humans, but the discharge can include pathogens such as salmonella, legionella and cryptosporidium. Those and other pathogens can cause diarrhea, typhoid, cholera and

tuberculosis, among a host of other nasty illnesses.

In the past, bacterial presence in Chicago's waterways didn't matter. The canals were clearly unfit for recreation, and even most fish steered clear of the muddy waterway.

These days, however, the water running through those same canals is a selling point to developers, a playground for active city dwellers and a home to 70 fish species.

"There are two schools of thought. There are people who think the river is just great," says Margaret Frisbie, executive director of Friends of the Chicago River and an avid kayaker. She notes the now-familiar sight of high school rowing teams on the waterways. "Then you have people that have been around longer ... who assume the river is just disgusting. ... Either the river must be fine, or the river is polluted. And neither one of those is accurate. It's something in between."

The Chicago Area Waterway System consists of the interconnected Chicago River, Sanitary and Ship Canal, Des Plaines River, Calumet-Sag Channel and Calumet River. Since Illinois began complying with the federal Clean Water Act of 1972, those waters have noticeably improved in appearance and composition. Under the Clean Water Act, any entity releasing polluted wastewater into exposed surface waters must have a permit to do so.

In complying with the act, Chicago and most other sanitary wastewater treatment districts have addressed pollutants in two ways: disinfecting and reducing the frequency of wholly untreated discharges due to heavy rains.

Chicago and about 120 other Illinois municipalities throughout the state run on combined sewer systems, where wastewater — flushed down toilets and drained from showers and sinks — runs through the same pipes as storm water — rain collected by street grates.

During severe weather, combined sewer systems are tasked with collecting more water than they can process. As a result, the storm water, mixed with wastewater, is dumped directly into waterways as combined sewer overflow to keep the entire system from backing up and flooding streets and homes. In Chicago, combined sewer overflows can cause contamination of Lake Michigan, the city's water supply.

To address combined sewer overflows, Chicago adopted a Tunnel and Reservoir Plan, locally known as TARP or Deep Tunnel, in 1972.

"The biggest thing that prompted people to use the waterways more was when they completed the tunnels on the Deep Tunnel project, and the sewer overflows went down from one every maybe three days to once a month," Sulski says. "As a result, the water looks cleaner most of the time."

Under the Deep Tunnel plan, overflow is held inside 109 miles of tunnel until the water can be pumped out, treated and released into the Chicago Area Waterway System. The system can now hold up to 2.3 billion gallons of water, but after three reservoirs are completed by 2024, it will hold up to 17.5 billion gallons.

Although the TARP system is not yet operating at full capacity, Chicago's reclamation district credits it for the return of aquatic life and the birth of recreational and commercial activity along the water-

ways. "Part of the reason people have built their homes [along the waterway] is because of the quality of the waterway, and we're happy to have that happen. But they still are what they are," Horist says.

Friends of the Chicago River lauds the district for its Deep Tunnel efforts but says it shouldn't stop there. "The whole reason disinfection is worthwhile is because they have done this amazing thing in a densely populated area," says Frisbie. "They should be proud of that. ... The natural next step is disinfection."

Once upon a time, Chicago did disinfect and, using chlorination and dechlorination techniques, still does at three of its smaller treatment plants that empty into natural streams. At the larger plants, the ones now in question, the district started chlorinating in the late 1960s. Because the chlorine killed all the fish and little to no recreation took place on Chicago's waterways, the district simply stopped disinfecting altogether in 1985. Now, with recreation on the rise, the Illinois EPA is taking another look at disinfection for the remaining treatment plants.

But Horist argues that large numbers of kayakers and paddlers just don't belong on barge-dominated waterways. Disinfection would only encourage the perception that such activities are welcome, leading to increased risks of kayaks meandering into the path of slow-to-stop industrial crafts.

The Illinois EPA contends that waterway history is a moot point. "It's irrelevant why it was built, how it was built. If there's an existing use or an attainable use out there ... you have to protect for it," Sulski says.

Horist also questions the sense of investing an estimated \$1 billion over 20 years in ultraviolet disinfection technology without knowing the impact it would have on incidents of waterborne illnesses.

To help quantify disinfection's purported benefits, the district commissioned a study from the University of Illinois Chicago at a cost of \$3.75 million. It tested water quality and asked recreators to report any incidents of illness after waterway use. Horist says preliminary results show pathogenic bacteria at statistically insignificant levels; full results are expected to be released later this year.

But even if the district proves that disinfection would not make a significant dent in recreation-related illnesses, cost versus benefit is not a valid part of the debate, contends Sulski. Federal exemption guidelines don't address cost, only affordability.

"The way the regulators look at it is: Can the population that's served, can they afford it? ... It's based on median income," Sulski says. "Some say it isn't affordable, but they haven't gone through that analysis."

Competing estimates released in 2007 placed the average household cost

There are two schools of thought. There are people who think the river is just great. Then you have people that have been around longer who assume the river is just disgusting. Either the river must be fine, or the river is polluted. And neither one of those is accurate. It's something in between.

***— Margaret Frisbie, executive director,
Friends of the Chicago River***

of disinfection at \$8.32 and \$45.13 each year, levied through property taxes.

"Nobody said we get to have clean air and clean water if we have enough money. They said we need to protect public health," Frisbie says. She suggests that the district start looking for grants and loans to fund the construction of disinfection facilities. "Rather than spend a lot of public money fighting something that protects public health, I would sit down ... and make a plan that makes this possible."

Besides monetary expenses, disinfection could have an environmental cost. "Effluent treatment will cause a rise in our carbon footprint, the energy it takes. There's conversation again of reducing carbon footprints. ... So where does that go? How does that happen?" Horist asks. Additional disinfection facilities would raise the district's annual carbon footprint by 98,300 tons of carbon dioxide, according to a study prepared for the district. Its 2008 output was 299,000 tons of carbon dioxide.

Frisbie calls both cost arguments "red herrings" and says the district should be looking for ways to fund disinfection instead of creating distractions. She says the district needs to conduct an energy audit on all of its operations and consider upgrading to newer, more efficient equipment.

While Chicago's reclamation district resists additional disinfection, the rest of

the country has already embraced the idea, Sulski says.

"Everywhere else you go, people are disinfecting the effluents," he says. Even among Illinois cities and towns, Chicago is a rarity in the quantities of bacteria it releases into what some argue are recreationally viable waterways.

While all Illinois dischargers can release nondisinfected wastewater into waterways during the winter months, to do so during the prime recreational months, May through October, requires a permit. The only way to achieve the exemption is for a discharger to prove to the Illinois EPA that no harm will follow.

"Always, year-round disinfection exemptions are issued to very small streams that can't be swimmable in or canoed on. They're always remote from incidental contact of any frequency," says Bob Mosher, Illinois EPA water quality standards manager. "Most small towns in Illinois ... are discharging into a very small stream or ditch surrounded by cornfields. That's the type of entity that gets an exemption."

Mosher guessed that 300 to 400 facilities in Illinois disinfect sanitary water. About 35 or 40 larger towns are exempt but only following regular examination of recreational potential along the receiving waterways.

"Just because everybody else does it, isn't a good enough reason," Horist says,

noting that Chicago's waterways are unique.

"[Most of] our effluent is not going into natural bodies of water," Horist says. "[Disinfection proponents] take great umbrage when I say they are engineered and manufactured waterways. They were built for the purpose of receiving treated effluent and commercial shipping. Recreation is a wonderful thing, but there's a point in the conversation not to lose sight of what [the waterways] are."

Part of what makes the Chicago Area Waterway System different and has allowed the reclamation district to avoid disinfection is its classification for use. Almost all of the waterways in Illinois are designated as general use systems. Chicago waterways, however, are currently classified as secondary contact use, meaning no one comes into contact with the water on purpose.

"One regulation concerning bacteria and disinfection exemptions applies to [about] 99.5 percent of the state. [There's] another that applies just to the canals in Chicago," Mosher says.

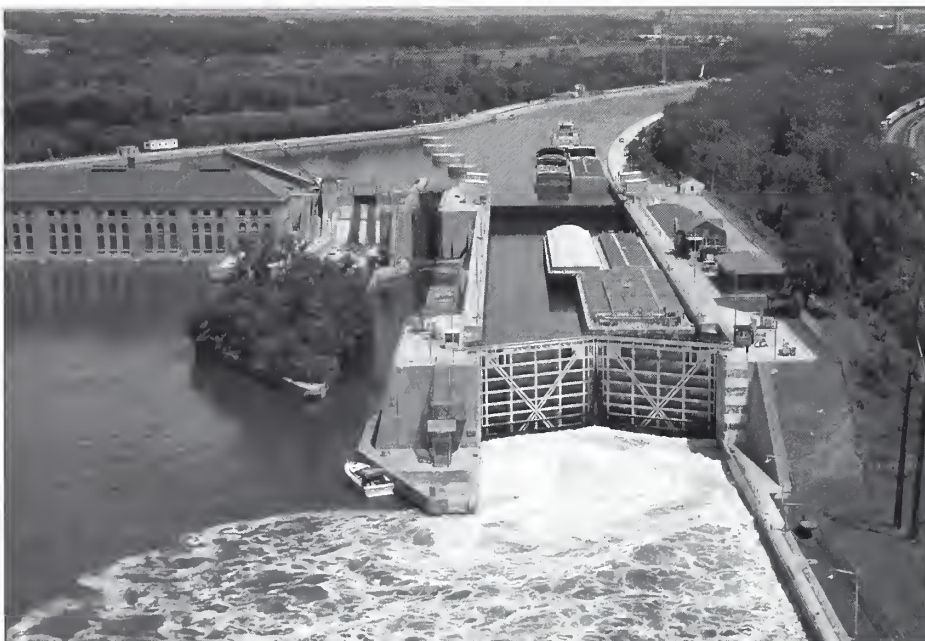
Under the secondary use umbrella, dischargers into Chicago area waterways are not required to prove to Illinois EPA that no harm will come from releasing nondisinfected wastewater.

"Essentially, [Illinois EPA] has nothing to say about whether those [Metropolitan Water Reclamation District] plants disinfect or not, as the current rules exist. We do not have to make a review or decision because it just is what it is. The rest of the state, that is our ongoing review and decision process," Mosher says.

Both the Illinois EPA and the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District expect the disinfection debate to continue for several more months. If the Illinois Pollution Control Board decides to recommend reclassification of the Chicago Area Waterway System, the Illinois legislature will then have a chance to weigh in through an oversight committee.

In the meantime, Chicago's reclamation district is planning to lobby in Springfield. There, the district hopes to recruit potential allies, such as business and manufacturing groups whose wastewater output would be more strictly regulated if the waterways are reclassified for recreational use. □

Photograph by Dan Wendt, courtesy of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District



Barges go between the Des Plaines River and the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal.

Balancing act

Though it was designed to protect consumers, a new law has sparked higher credit card interest rates for many

by Marcia Frellick

Traditionally, as college students arrive on campus in the fall and sign up for laundry service, meal plans and courses, they encounter a table where credit card recruiters urge them to apply for an account in exchange for pizza, T-shirts, even a chance to win an iPod.

Such promotions were part of the orientation experience on Illinois campuses, but that ends this year thanks to the new Credit Card Marketing Act. Gov. Pat Quinn last year signed the law, which went into effect January 1. It forbids credit card companies from enticing students to open accounts with offers of gifts, food and low introductory interest rates.

At the signing ceremony for the law in August, Quinn said, "This law will put an end to the gimmicks and trickery used to entice young people into taking on more consumer debt than they can handle."

The Illinois law coincides with the new federal Credit CARD (Card Accountability, Responsibility and Disclosure) Act of 2009. Some of the provisions of that law began in August of last year, but the bulk of the new rules kicked in on February 22 of this year.

In addition to ending the practice of soliciting students with "tangible items" within 1,000 feet of colleges or universities nationwide, the federal law introduces sweeping reforms intended to help consumers pay their credit cards on time, learn more about the fees they are paying and protect themselves from predatory lending practices.

The law comes at a time when Americans facing job loss and uncertain economic futures are also struggling to pay their credit card bills. Approximately 6.7 percent of credit cards were 30 or more days past due in the second quarter of 2009 — the highest rate in 18 years, according to the Federal Reserve.

Creditors counter that the law will make credit card use more costly for all consumers and inaccessible for low-income families or those with bad credit.

Already, millions of consumers have seen their rates go up in the months leading up to the new law. And the national average credit card rate reflects the increases. According to creditcards.com, the average card rate six months ago stood at 12 percent. In January 2010, it hit 13.2 percent, the highest credit card average rate since 2007.

President Barack Obama signed the federal act on May 22, 2009. The first wave of provisions began August 22 and among the changes were new rules that creditors had to give 45 days' notice, instead of 15, before they could change terms of the credit agreement. They also had to give consumers 21 days to pay their bills rather than 14.

Most of the provisions, though, began last month. The three categories in which major changes have occurred are protections for young consumers, payments and fees and disclosures.

In addition to banning campus solicitations, the law now demands that anyone under 21 who is not an authorized user on

a parent's credit card account needs a co-signer to open an account or proof of financial independence to get an account in their own name.

That portion of the law is designed to protect young consumers from getting into debt too early in life. According to an April 2009 Sallie Mae study, 84 percent of American college students have a credit card, and the average balance is \$3,173. Half of college students had four or more credit cards, the study found.

Angela Lyons, associate professor and director of the University of Illinois Center for Economic and Financial Education, says restrictions on young consumers have pluses and minuses.

"Tuition is going up, and it may be harder for students who in the past were using credit cards as a cushion or buffer to help them get through a difficult financial period because they've got to have a co-signer now," she says. "On the flip side, there are positive benefits — credit card debt is one of the worst types of debt you can take on. Even now with student credit cards, which have traditionally had lower interest rates, the rates have gone up to 12, 15, 21 percent. Credit card companies have tried to lock in higher rates before the law takes effect."

Catherine Williams, vice president of financial literacy for Money Management International, the parent company for Consumer Credit Counseling Services of Greater Chicago, says the restrictions on young consumers may go too far.

"It wasn't that they couldn't manage credit; it was they couldn't manage the *amount* of credit being offered to them," she says. "I would have preferred to see a little more balance — either a combination of less credit or smaller credit lines — I mean \$500 to \$750 — that was more commensurate with the student's history and ability to repay."

"There are lots of young people out there working. Some have chosen not to pursue college or are doing it at a slower rate. That's not fair either."

Meanwhile, the Credit CARD Act addresses the way credit card issuers calculate and add fees and change provisions that have led to consumer frustration and distrust. Scott Mulford, a spokesman in Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan's office, says that in 2008 complaints about consumer debt were No. 1 on the top 10 complaints the office compiles each year. More than 1,000 Illinois consumers filed complaints about unexpected fees and charges to monthly statements, sudden increases in interest rates and sudden reductions of credit limits, Mulford says.

One key complaint is about universal default — the practice of raising interest rates on an account based on the consumer's delinquency on other unrelated accounts such as utilities and other credit card companies. That practice ends for existing credit card balances. However, card issuers would still be allowed to use universal default if they give at least 45 days' advance notice of the change.

Evelyn Prasse, consumer and family educator at University of Illinois Extension, says that has been a big concern for account holders.

"This will save consumers money. Even if they have been on time with payments for one company, sometimes they got caught because they were not paying on time with another company, so their interest rates were increased. Now [credit card companies] can't do that. They can raise it only on the individual accounts."

Under the new law, consumers also must be more than 60 days late on a payment before the company can raise rates on an existing balance. This will eliminate retroactive rate increases. If the rate is increased, it must revert to the previous amount if the consumer logs six months of on-time payments.

***Under the new law,
consumers must be more than
60 days late on a payment
before the company can raise
rates on an existing balance.***

Over-the-limit fees also will disappear. Lyons explains the new regulations this way:

"If you go over your limit, your charge will just be rejected, and you won't be charged any fees. You as a consumer have to opt in to get the second option — to be allowed to go over the limit. I don't know why a consumer would want to do that other than avoiding the embarrassment factor [of having a card rejected]. Then if they go over the limit, they do have to pay a fee. But they only have to pay it once. If they do it again the next month, they'd have to pay the fee again."

Lyons says one of the best features of the new law is that as of February 22, credit card issuers have to pay off the highest interest-rate balance, instead of the lowest, on a card when the amount of payment exceeds the minimum payment due.

"Say you transferred a balance and were getting a rate of zero percent for six months. Then you started making purchases on that card, and the purchases, let's say, were at 16.9 percent. If you made a payment to your card, it would go toward paying off the zero percent balance instead of the 16.9 percent balance. So the credit card companies were accumulating all this interest on the high-interest-rate balance. Now what's going to happen is any payment you make is going to have to go toward paying off the highest interest-rate balance on that card first. That should have been done a long time ago."

In addition to the increased notice when issuers change rates or fees that went into effect in August 2009, the law will make many other changes much more transparent.

One big change addresses promotional rates.

"The mailman must have chuckled as he carried these credit card offers — today

and today only introductory rate!" says MMI's Williams. "Then we found out after we got into it that they were only good for the first 90 days, and if you did anything other than exactly what the offer said, you paid a much higher rate."

The new law says these "teaser" rates must be disclosed in a clear and conspicuous manner and can't increase until after the advertised period, which must be at least six months.

Another feature is that credit card statements will have to show how long it would take to pay off your balance if you make only the minimum payment. Say you have a balance of \$1,784.53 and your interest rate is 21.99 percent. Your statement will tell you that if you make no more charges and you continue to make the minimum payment of \$53, it will take you 10 years to pay it off, and you will end up paying \$3,284. Then it would tell you that if you pay \$62 each month, you will pay off the debt in three years and will pay \$2,232, a savings of \$1,052, just by paying \$9 more a month.

Consumers confused about what day or even what time a payment is due also get relief from the new transparency.

Credit card issuers will no longer be able to set early morning or other arbitrary deadlines for payments. Cut-off times set before 5 p.m. on the payment due dates would be illegal under the new law. Payments due on weekends, holidays or when the card issuer is closed for business will not be hit with late fees.

Under the law, credit card statements will also provide toll-free numbers for credit counseling services.

"Those services have been vetted by the U.S. Bankruptcy Trustees," Lyons says. "So there is a check and balance system if you think you need help with debt management."

In August, more changes under the Credit CARD Act will be phased in. Among changes are protections in the use of gift cards. Consumers exasperated by expiration dates, fees for partial usage and inactivity will see a big change. Effective August 22, gift cards cannot expire for five years unless the terms of expiration are clearly stated in the agreement. Users cannot be charged dormancy or inactivity fees unless the card has not been used for 12 months and the issuer clearly describes all fees before the card is purchased.

Analysts agree that the new act will take the “gotcha” factor out of the fine print in credit card agreements. Kenneth Clayton, senior vice president at the American Bankers Association, said in a statement after the regulations were passed: “Many practices that frustrated customers have been eliminated, and credit card users will now benefit from greater control and clearer terms for their accounts.”

But the ABA also says in a statement that under the new act the credit system becomes a one-size-fits-all model and “interest rates will likely increase for nearly everyone, including those with good credit history, as those who successfully manage their credit will be subsidizing those who have not.” It also states that “even customers that have a good credit score or have never missed a payment will likely see less credit available to them.”

In its December report *Dodging Reform: As Some Credit Card Abuses Are Outlawed, New Ones Proliferate*, the Center for Responsible Lending studied abuses in advance of the new rules and among them found an increase during the last year in the practice of charging consumers for not using or closing their account, with fees as high as \$36 a year.

And even if you’ve paid off your balances every month, you may get hit with new annual fees as lenders look for ways to make up for what they’re losing under the Credit CARD Act. The good news there is that if you’ve paid off your balances every month, you may have better credit scores and more bargaining power in shopping for a better agreement.

Despite some loopholes and some problems it doesn’t address, Williams says, the act will give Illinois consumers — hit hard with job losses and home foreclosures — a much-needed break with clearer disclosure and more time and better tools to evaluate their bills.

“Illinois has probably endured a little higher unemployment even during the really prosperous times,” Williams says. “We’ve gotten hit much harder because of the kinds of industries we have in Illinois. ... I think this law gives us a little more opportunity to manage our finances — and right now every opportunity we’ve got helps us on the road to recovery.” □

Marcia Frellick is a Chicago-based freelance writer.



Lessons from the flu

Health officials dealing with H1N1 today are trying to use some of the hard-won knowledge gained from the devastating 1918 flu pandemic

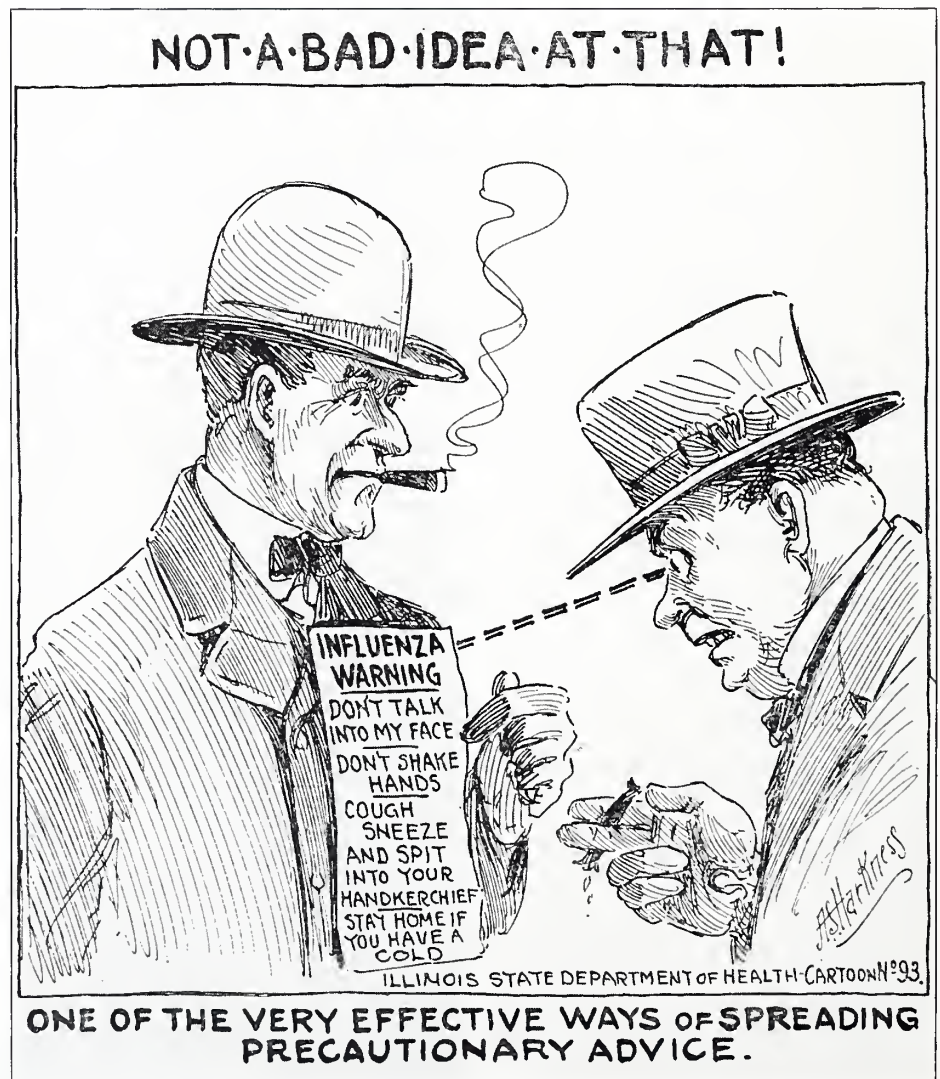
by Tara McClellan McAndrew

In the spring of 1918, a Chicago pathologist conducted an autopsy on a supposed pneumonia patient and was dismayed by what he found. The deceased's lightning-speed death and hemorrhaged lungs weren't typical of pneumonia. What had done this? The pathologist was so concerned that he asked a renowned infectious disease specialist to determine whether this was a new disease, according to John M. Barry's *The Great Influenza* (Penguin Books, 2004).

Surprisingly, the pathologist's findings didn't alarm Chicago or Illinois health officials. "I wouldn't blame them," says Barry, who has advised the federal government and World Health Organization on influenza. "No one picked up on it. Maybe it's not so much that there wasn't enough evidence to act, but there wasn't enough knowledge to act."

Today, health officials are trying to use some of the hard-won knowledge gained from the devastating 1918 flu pandemic to help them deal with the current H1N1 outbreak. As of mid-February, nearly 3,000 Illinoisans had been hospitalized with H1N1, and 98 had died from it, according to the Illinois Department of Public Health. And H1N1 may not be done with us yet.

Although the pathologist didn't realize it in the spring of 1918, he had encoun-



A cartoon published in an Illinois Department of Public Health publication in 1918

tered an old disease that had morphed into a meaner, deadlier version of itself, making it difficult to recognize. That pneumonia patient was actually a victim of the first — and least harmful — wave of an influenza pandemic that would kill at least 50 million people worldwide — and possibly as many as 100 million, according to the January 2006 issue of *Emerging Infectious Diseases*.

Health officials should have been terrified, but they didn't know any better.

The 1918 influenza pandemic has been called the worst in American history and possibly the worst worldwide pandemic in recorded history. Scientists estimate it infected one-third of the planet's population. Throughout the nation, health officials were dumbstruck by this killer. They weren't sure what it was, what caused it or what to do about it. They tried to learn on the job.

In Illinois, that job was made tougher by other challenges facing the state's health professionals. A year before the pandemic hit, Illinois' public health department was reorganized, and officials thought "the stage was all set for the State to embark upon a splendid program of disease control and prevention," according to the 1927 Illinois Department of Public Health book, *The Rise and Fall of Disease in Illinois* (Vol. I).

However, World War I left the department short-staffed. Many physicians and nurses went to help the military in Europe. Those who stayed home were lured away from the department by better paying, war-related jobs. Even those who stayed with the department weren't able to perform their usual duties of helping local communities with quarantines and the development of local health organizations because they had to provide medical assistance to the state's military camps. To make matters worse, an epidemic of infantile paralysis and a large outbreak of venereal disease, especially among soldiers, required their immediate attention.

In 1918, *Illinois Health News*, a monthly Illinois Department of Public Health publication about state health issues, didn't even mention the word influenza until August, when that spring's "epidemic" was the subject of a joke.



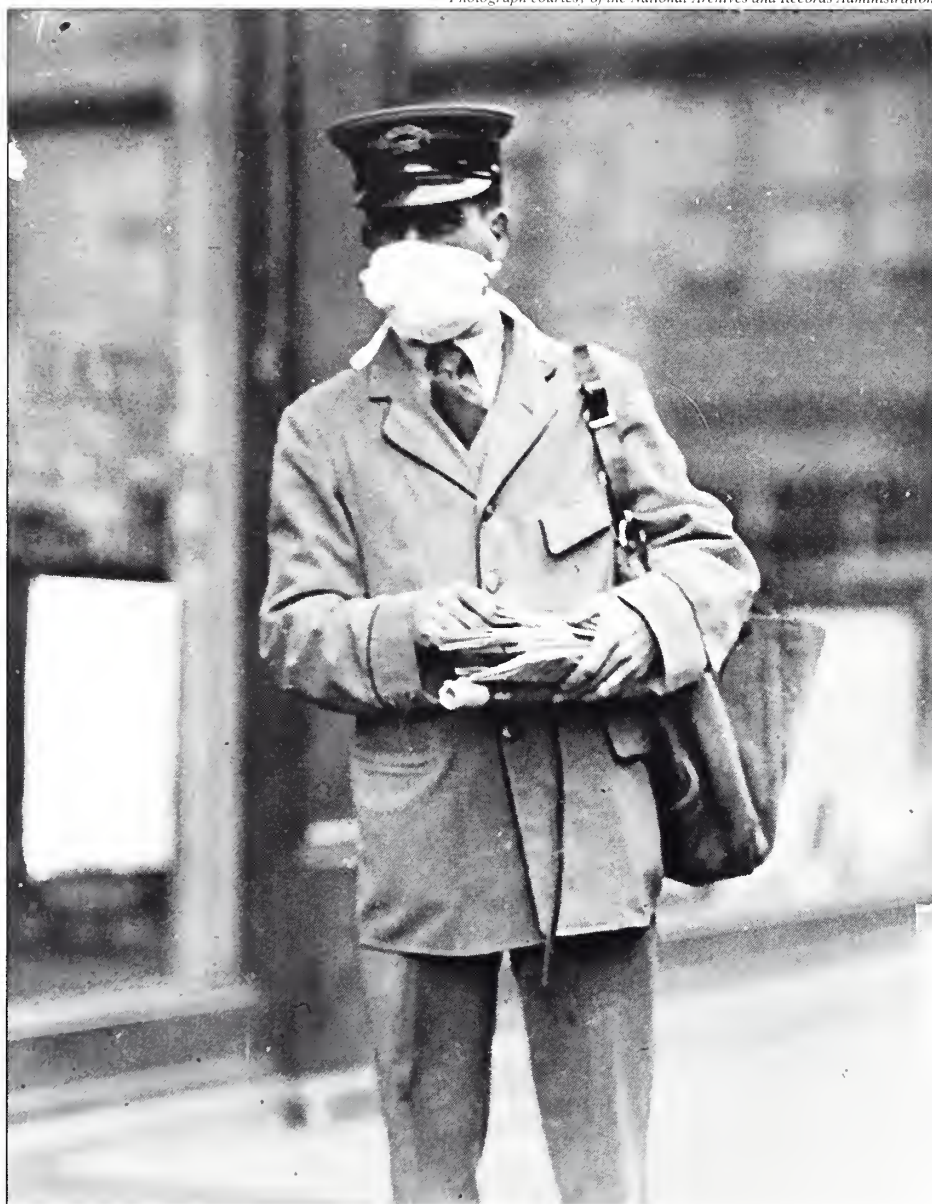
A nurse wears a mask as protection against influenza in 1918.

The publication next mentioned the flu in October, but nobody was joking. By then, the state and other parts of the nation were in the death grip of "la grippe," an older name for the flu. This was the second and deadliest wave of the scourge. Nearly the entire October issue of *Illinois Health News* was devoted to "the most devastating epidemic the State has ever known." The tone was slightly panicked.

The publication detailed how the pandemic first hit the state in early September in the little town of Elco in southwestern Illinois and simultaneously at the Great Lakes Naval Training Center near Waukegan in northeastern Illinois. Military camps were among the first and hardest-hit targets of this misnamed "Spanish flu." (Recently, some

researchers have theorized that it originated in Kansas.)

Josic Mabel Brown was a young nurse who'd been ordered by the War Department to help the sick at Illinois' Great Lakes Center. She and other nurses thought the men had cerebrospinal meningitis, according to 1986 articles in *Navy Medicine* ("A Winding Sheet and a Wooden Box" and "The Influenza Epidemic of 1918"). The center's hospital didn't have enough beds or nurses to keep up with the legion of patients. To save time, nurses prepared the bodies of the sick for their certain death while they were still alive. They wrapped the patients in sheets and tagged their left big toes with their name, rank, nearest family member and hometown.



A letter carrier in October of 1918 wears a mask for protection against influenza.

"We didn't have time to treat them. We didn't take temperatures; we didn't even have time to take blood pressure," Brown says in the article. "We would give them a little hot whiskey toddy; that's about all we had time to do." Often patients were delirious from high fevers and had explosive nosebleeds. Although masked and gowned, the overworked nurses might still be covered with blood by the end of their 18-hour shifts. Not surprisingly, some nurses throughout the state caught the flu and died. (Brown got sick but survived.)

Even though soldiers had been deathly ill at the Great Lakes Center and several other camps throughout the country for up to a week and a half, U.S. Surgeon

General Rupert Blue didn't require military ships returning from Europe to be checked for influenza until September 13, 1918. Even if influenza was present, the ships wouldn't be quarantined; they were free to land after local health officials were notified, according to Barry's book.

At Illinois' Camp Grant near Rockford, camp commander Col. Charles Hagadorn defied health regulations and ignored physicians' warnings about encroaching influenza. He crowded soldiers into the barracks: Winter was coming, and those who slept outside were getting cold; he thought they'd be warmer inside. Afterward, at least 450 men developed influenza and died.

Before the flu was done with his men, Hagadorn shot himself.

To combat the flu in Chicago, the city's public health commissioner, John Robertson, initiated anti-spitting and anti-sneezing campaigns but thwarted other, more stringent (and probably more effective) measures, according to Barry. At one point, the state public health director urged Robertson and other health officials to close local businesses. Robertson "violently" disagreed, Barry writes. Robertson later wrote that he wanted to reassure the public, not panic it.

On September 25, as the flu spread, the IDPH released rules to quell it; about a week later, it released stricter regulations. The department required everyone to report any known or suspected case of influenza or pneumonia (this influenza often turned into fatal pneumonia), required that affected patients be isolated and their materials disinfected or destroyed, and prohibited public funerals for victims unless the bodies were embalmed and in a tight casket. The penalty for noncompliance was \$200 per violation and/or jail.

Near the end of September, the Council of National Defense required Illinois to establish a state Influenza Commission with members from the Army, Navy, U.S. Public Health Service, American Red Cross, and state and Chicago health officials. During the height of the crisis, the commission met daily. To stay on top of the situation, IDPH set up offices in Chicago for a month and a half.

On October 9, Surgeon General Blue recommended that every state close its public gathering places temporarily, but because the flu hadn't yet shown up in all parts of Illinois, state officials enforced that recommendation only if local conditions warranted, according to an Illinois Influenza Commission report in the January 1919 *American Journal of Public Health*. Since people could be contagious before they showed symptoms, that surely aided the epidemic's spread.

As some communities set up emergency influenza hospitals to accommodate the overflow of patients in the middle of October, the state prohibited all gatherings not essential to war efforts.

(Schools could stay open if they passed a medical inspection.) Eventually, some cities closed schools and churches and were quarantined.

The worst for Illinois was probably the last week of October, when more than 40,000 new cases of influenza were reported, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Around this time, IDPH distributed vaccines that scientists hoped would prevent the flu, but they were bacteria-based and therefore worthless. Influenza is caused by a virus, but viruses hadn't been discovered yet.

A third wave of influenza struck during the winter of 1918-1919. It wasn't as bad as the second, but it still caused about one-third of the pandemic's total deaths.

The 1918 flu killed nearly 23,500 Illinoisans, according to IDPH. A year later, when the agency assessed health officials' response to this storm, it cited inadequate local staff as one problem. Most communities had part-time medical directors who were private-practice physicians. During the pandemic, they were torn between caring for their own patients and fulfilling their public duties. IDPH urged communities to hire full-time medical directors as a remedy.

Health officials also saw the benefits of keeping an eye on schools' conditions through medical inspections and school nurses, so they encouraged communities to make both features permanent, according to the Illinois Influenza Commission.

There were bigger lessons, says author and influenza consultant John Barry. "First, we learned to take influenza seriously. Second, we learned to make a conscious effort to tell the truth [about diseases]. At least in the U.S., there has been an attempt to institutionalize candor, although how promptly and clearly that will be done will always depend on individuals. Third, we learned to try to analyze what kind of nonpharmaceutical interventions can work."

He says one of the biggest problems in 1918 was "nearly the entire public health community almost universally lied once it knew [what caused the pandemic], saying: 'This is nothing but ordinary influenza by another name,' and 'Fear kills more than the disease.'"

Barry says officials lied to prevent fear, but "it had the opposite effect — it destroyed trust and created alienation and panic." It's still a problem today, according to a white paper he prepared for the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, because some countries downplayed or misrepresented the current threat of H1N1, which jeopardized not only their citizens, but the world.

In the January 20, 2010, *Journal of the American Medical Association*, Drs. Heidi Larson and David Heymann advised health officials to use the current H1N1 pandemic to build the public's trust: "Lack of trust can cause health programs to fail with harmful consequences." Building trust requires "being clear about what is unknown and what is known and ... clarity about the basis for decision making."

"It also requires," Barry adds, "that when decisions are made, taking the offense through a massive campaign to dominate all media, including the Internet."

But can health officials be victims of their own success when they follow these measures? We've all heard what we should do to prevent H1N1 (wash your hands often, cover your coughs and sneezes, etc.), and it appears, largely, to have worked. From the public's perspective, the pandemic seems less severe than expected, and many people don't feel threatened anymore. Fewer Illinoisans are getting H1N1 vaccinations than in the fall, according to IDPH. A January 26, 2010, article on Time.com even asked if the H1N1 threat was "exaggerated."

"Government did not exaggerate the threat," Barry says. "The 1918 pandemic, which was also caused by an H1N1 virus, began with an extremely mild spring wave, almost exactly like in 2009. Then it turned lethal in the fall. Last year, at the time decisions were being made, no one could have predicted whether something similar would happen this time. ... We simply didn't and still don't know enough."

Both the IDPH and Centers for Disease Control (CDC) said the same thing: Pandemics and influenza are very unpredictable. "Similar to the CDC, we prepared for the worst, hoped for the best, and tackled the virus with prevention education, antivirals and eventually

"First, we learned to take influenza seriously. Second, we learned to make a conscious effort to tell the truth [about diseases]. At least in the U.S., there has been an attempt to institutionalize candor, although how promptly and clearly that will be done will always depend on individuals."

— author John Barry

vaccine as it spread," says IDPH spokeswoman Melaney Arnold. "We will continue to educate the public, now and in the future, that a pandemic influenza has the potential to be very severe and that people must remain vigilant and not become complacent." She says that although the likelihood of illness has decreased, people are still getting sick, being hospitalized and dying. "The more people who are vaccinated now, when there is an ample supply of vaccine, the better the chance of reducing the possibility of a third wave."

Jeff Dimond, a CDC spokesman, says, "It is far better to err on the side of caution than to have been neglectful in the face of a potentially deadly virus." He points to a "similar" flu pandemic in 1957-58. Then, like now, "there was a steep decline in people reporting symptoms of illness in late January and early February. But [in 1958], the U.S. government sounded the 'all clear' message, and the virus promptly came roaring back at levels rivaling its earlier rates."

However, if we're successful at fighting the H1N1 pandemic, it could backfire, Barry says. If the pandemic remains mild, "it could appear to the uninformed that the government cried wolf. Will that hurt public health efforts in general, and influenza preparedness in particular? Yes." □

Tara McClellan McAndrew is a Springfield-based free-lance writer.

LOW TURNOUT, TIGHT RACES

Voter turnout was low — the Illinois State Board of Elections estimated less than 30 percent — for the Illinois primary election in February.

Gov. **Pat Quinn** narrowly defeated Comptroller Dan Hynes in the Democratic primary for governor. At press time, Bloomington Sen. **Bill Brady** was leading Hinsdale Sen. **Kirk Dillard** for the Republican nomination by just over 400 votes, raising the likelihood of a recount.

Chicago pawnbroker **Scott Lee Cohen** was elected as the Democratic nominee for lieutenant governor but stepped down after an outcry about his scandalous background, which included allegations of abuse of women. Another relatively unknown candidate funded mainly with his own money, **Jason Plummer**, from Edwardsville, won the the Republican nomination. He works in his family's business, R.P. Lumber. Governor and lieutenant governor candidates from the same party run as a team in the general election.

The close races stumped many pollsters, but at least one contest went as expected. Democratic state Treasurer **Alexi Giannoulis** and Republican U.S. Rep. **Mark Kirk** will battle for President Barack Obama's former Senate seat.

Rep. **David Miller** of Lynwood defeated **Raja Krishnamoorthi** of Hoffman Estates for the Democratic nomination for the comptroller's office. He will face former state Treasurer **Judy Baar Topinka** of Riverside in November.

Robin Kelly, a former state representative from Matteson and Giannoulis' chief of staff, is the Democratic candidate for state treasurer. She is pitted against Sen. **Dan Rutherford** from Chenoa.

State legislators vying for Kirk's U.S. House seat did not



fare well. Rep. **Beth Coulson**, a Glenview Republican, lost her bid to Kenilworth businessman **Robert Dold**, a former staffer for Vice President Dan Quayle. Wilmette business consultant **Dan Seals** beat out Wilmette Rep. **Julie Hamos** in the Democratic race for the seat.

However, Winfield Sen. **Randall Hultgren** defeated **Ethan Hastert** of Elburn in the Republican primary for the U.S. House seat that used to belong to Hastert's father, former U.S. House Speaker Dennis Hastert. Hultgren will face Democratic U.S. Rep. **Bill Foster** of Geneva in the general election.

Palatine Rep. **Suzanne Bassi**, who was running for a seventh term in the Illinois House, lost in the Republican primary to **Tom Morrison**, also from Palatine.

Honors



Tere O'Connor, a University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign dance professor, has been selected as one of 50 United States Artist Fellows, an annually bestowed recognition for artists in a wide range of disciplines.

The fellowship comes with a \$50,000 unrestricted grant to fund work or philanthropy, or for personal use. In applying for the fellowship, O'Connor described his latest project, *Wrought Iron Fog*, which premiered in November at Dance Theatre Workshop in New York City.

"What I'm working on is the fact that there's no specific denotative meaning in any movement, so it's completely open to interpretation," O'Connor says. "Wrought iron, for example — it's this beautiful thing but there's no author to it. ... It's not about a validation of the author. It's a validation of the object itself."

"The inspiration for *Wrought Iron Fog* had something to do with a kind of dialogue between the fact that time is passing forward constantly and an attempt to create fixed states as a choreographer. There's a contradiction there. ... You're

trying to shape something, but the whole time you're shaping something, time is moving forward."

A choreographer since 1982, O'Connor says his work does not factor in mass aesthetic appeal, a difficult approach to maintain. "It's really good to be recognized [while] not making a mainstream product, a kind of art that doesn't wear the clothing of commercial endeavors." He sees the award as a validation of his work and its investigational focus.

O'Connor founded the Tere O'Connor Dance Co. in 1985. He has taught dance at Ohio State University, New York University's Tisch School of the Arts and Movement Research in New York City. O'Connor also curates at dance theaters, teaches workshops and mentors dance professionals. He joined the UIUC faculty in 2006 and now splits his time between Illinois and New York.

Rachel Wells

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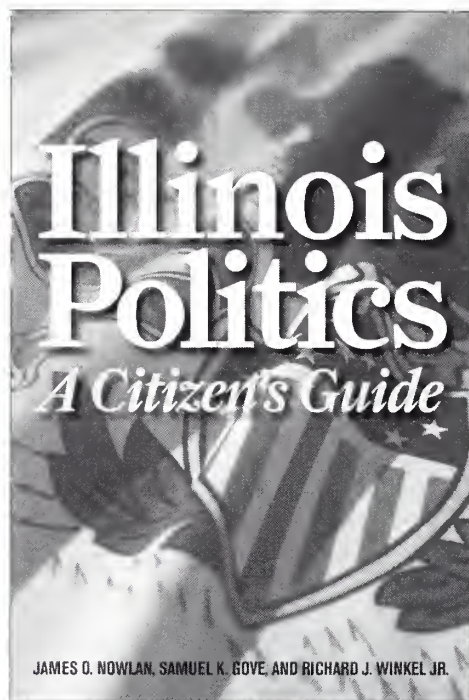
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JAMES D. NOWLAN, SAMUEL K. GOVE, and RICHARD J. WINKEL JR.

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Charles N. Wheeler III



The latest, never-seen-before episode in the state's storied political history

by Charles N. Wheeler III

The Illinois State Board of Elections will meet soon to officially proclaim the results of last month's primary, thus ending (maybe) the latest, never-seen-before episode in the state's storied political history.

The uncertainty marking the board's declaration reflects two facts: the candidate deemed the victor in the seven-person Republican primary for governor — at this writing, Sen. Bill Brady of Bloomington by some 420 votes over Sen. Kirk Dillard of Hinsdale — could well face a recount. Meanwhile, the top-vote-getting Democrat for lieutenant governor already has bowed out of the race amid controversy over what most charitably could be termed a checkered past.

However things sort out in coming days, the outcome of the earliest primary in state history lends itself to a number of intriguing observations.

- For months, national pundits and TV talking heads have yammered about an angry electorate, enraged voters ready to take up pitchforks and flaming torches to storm the castles of incumbency. The revolutionary fervor apparently missed Illinoisans — roughly three out of four registered voters weren't energized enough to make it to the polls. Perhaps the no-shows are so deep in despair that even voting seems futile. Still, the ballot included two dozen sitting federal and

Irony was the watchword in the battle royal for the Democratic gubernatorial nomination.

state lawmakers facing primary challenges and thus potential voter wrath. Twenty-three of the 24 emerged victorious; the only casualty was state Rep. Suzie Bassi, a moderate Republican from Palatine, bested by a more conservative challenger.

- Irony was the watchword in the battle royal for the Democratic gubernatorial nomination. In this corner, Gov. Pat Quinn, who cut his political teeth almost 40 years ago helping maverick Dan Walker win the party's nomination for governor over the Daley machine's slated candidate, Lt. Gov. Paul Simon. Since then, he's made a career as a populist outsider with special ties to downstaters. In the far corner, state Comptroller Dan Hynes, a bona fide scion of the 19th Ward Democratic Organization holding the quintessential Chicago educational pedigree, Notre Dame University and Loyola Law School.

So Quinn narrowly wins the nomination, 50.4 percent to 49.6 percent, roughly 8,100 votes, thanks to money — such as a \$250,000 loan from Ald. Ed Burke (14th) — and voting muscle from Chicago and Cook County Democrats, who gave him a 40,000-vote edge over the comptroller. Hynes, meanwhile, carries 85 of the 96 counties outside the metropolitan area, garnering 57 percent of the downstate vote, a 30,000-vote margin, and carries the collar counties by about 2,000 votes.

- Quinn's margin was the closest for a Democratic nominee for governor in at least 50 years, but his win was a landslide, compared with the GOP cliff-hanger. Brady and Dillard were separated by just 0.05 percent — 1/20th of a percentage point — according to the unofficial tally. Whoever gets the board's nod on proclamation day — or may prevail in a later recount — one thing is certain: four out of five Republican voters wanted somebody else, meaning a lot of fence-mending and reaching-out will be on the winner's agenda.

The bigger challenge would seem to be Brady's, given his abysmal showing in the Chicago suburbs, where he ran a distant sixth, besting only a candidate who had withdrawn. Brady got just 22,000 suburban votes, fewer than 6 percent, compared with Dillard's 76,000. And the Hinsdale lawmaker finished third in the

suburbs, behind Andy McKenna's 96,000 and former Attorney General Jim Ryan's 85,000.

But Brady piled up 132,000 downstate votes to Dillard's 74,000, a 37 percent to 21 percent edge. Newcomer Adam Andrzejewski, a favorite of Tea Partiers, finished a respectable third downstate, with 54,000 votes, while McKenna and Ryan barely cracked double digits, percentage-wise, outside the suburbs.

Brady's task of wooing suburban voters could be complicated by his strong conservative views on abortion, school prayer, gun rights and other hard-right issues that historically have had limited appeal to suburbanites.

- Having the same primary produce the two closest races for gubernatorial nominations in the last half century certainly is one for the books. But overshadowing the suspense for governor was the "you-gotta-be-kidding-me" aura surrounding the Democratic nomination for the No. 2 spot. Scott Lee Cohen spent more than \$2 million of his own money to best five other hopefuls for lieutenant governor in a

low-key race. Only after the votes were counted did folks start looking more closely at Cohen, and then Democratic faithful were appalled to find that their nominee brought more baggage than Ringling Brothers, certainly enough to sink Quinn. After several days of party hand-wringing, Cohen agreed to step down on Super Bowl Sunday, thus allowing Democratic leaders to find someone less colorful.

The episode triggered a round of finger-pointing: at voters who didn't look beyond clever TV ads and slick mailers in evaluating candidates, at reporters who didn't pay enough attention to a relatively minor office to chronicle a candidate's serious shortcomings, even at an election season compressed into four hectic weeks.

Valid criticisms all, but in truth, the major culpability should rest with Democratic Party leaders, from state chairman Michael Madigan on down. They're the ones with the most at stake should voters nominate a candidate who could pose a threat to the entire ticket. That's

especially so for the office of lieutenant governor, "one heartbeat away," as the cliché goes, from the state's top job.

Indeed, Democratic leaders should have been particularly attuned to the danger after their experience in 1986, when two followers of extremist Lyndon La Rouché won Democratic primaries for lieutenant governor and for secretary of state. The party's gubernatorial nominee, Adlai Stevenson, refused to run paired with a La Rouchie, instead forming a third party that went down in flames in November.

While Cohen's liabilities pale in comparison with the La Rouché beliefs, a little background checking this time would have uncovered the problems, allowing party workers to encourage the faithful to mark for someone else, thus sparing Illinois Democrats another round as the late-night comics' favorite target. To paraphrase the party's best known piñata, "What were they thinking?" □

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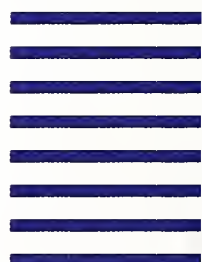
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